CHAIRPERSON: Representative Joe Verrengia

SENATORS: Bradley, Cassano, Champagne, Hwang, Osten, Winfield

REPRESENTATIVES: Allie-Brennan, Barry, Boyd, Camillo, Dauphinais, Fusco, Genga, Gonzalez, Hall, Hayes, Morin, Orange, Paolillo, Serra, Simmons, Sredzinski, Vail

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Good morning, everyone, and welcome to this morning’s public safety public hearing meeting. We’ll start off by wishing everyone a happy Valentine’s Day. Also before we get started, I’m going to refer to our clerk for a safety message.

NICOLETTA BLEVINS: In the interest of safety, I would ask you to note the location of and access to the exits in this hearing room. The two doors for which you entered the room are the emergency exits and are marked with exit signs. In an emergency, the two doors behind the legislators can also be used. In the event of an emergency, please walk quickly to the nearest exit. After exiting the room, go to your left and exit the building by the main entrance or follow the exit signs to one of the other exits. Please quickly exit the building and follow any instructions from the Capitol Police. Do not delay and do not return unless or until you are advised that it is safe to do so. In the event of a
lockdown announcement, please remain in the hearing room, stay away from the exit doors, and seek concealment behind desks and chairs until an all-clear announcement is heard. Thank you.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Okay, thank you for that announcement. Just as far as how we’ll run the meeting today, we’ll be working off of two lists; the first hour of the public hearing will be reserved for elected officials and municipal officials and agency heads. I ask that you kindly keep your comments under five minutes and after the hour, we’ll open it up to the general public and there will be a limit of three minutes for opening comments, followed by any questions committee members may have. So we’re going to be strict with the time frames given the number of bills and the number of people who want to speak on those bills that are important to them. So first up, I have Senator Looney, I don’t see him here, and then Representative Zawistowski, she will be coming, so we’re going to start with Commissioner Rovella.

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: Good morning, everyone. Thank you, Representative Verrengia, and to everyone in the committee, good morning, and everyone in the gallery, good morning, especially the law enforcement and firefighters that are here to testify today and I apologize up front if I didn’t make note of your particular bill, but ladies and gentlemen, I’m here to answer questions on anything you may have. I consider my position to be one of this is the committee of cognizance for me and I consider that to be a role that I will meet with folks and I will offer education to folks and work through their bills as much as I can, be as cooperative as I can. So I did submit some written
testimony for everybody to read, but I think what’s in between the lines is probably most important.

For instance, Senate Bill 709, AN ACT CREATING A DIVISION OF CYBER SECURITY WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES AND PUBLIC PROTECTION, currently we have a very robust cyber unit that’s attached to the Joint Terror and Taskforce with the FBI. We also have a cyber information officer assigned at DESPP. Both are good starts, but I did meet with Senator Hwang and we did talk about enhancing that and I think it includes our partners here, too, our partners at DAS and BEST and that should be a robust conversation because that is an area where we are seeing the most attacks, both nationwide, worldwide, and in the state of Connecticut on many different levels, so I’m very open to that conversation and continuing that conversation.

House Bill 5279, AN ACT CONCERNING A NUMBER OF SWORN STATE POLICE OFFICERS, I think every chief in this room or every commissioner or colonel in this room would say more, more, more is better, but realistically, we are having difficulty recruiting troopers, as local law enforcement is, too, retaining those troopers and training those troopers. Presently, we have 915 officers and I scheduled 45 to come out of the class very soon to bring us to 960 and I’m working very close with OPM and I made an extensive ask of OPM and on the 20th, we’ll hear exactly where we’re going with those requests for troopers.

The House Bill 6155, AN ACT CONCERNING REGIONALIZATION OR CONSOLIDATION OF 9-1-1 DISPATCH CENTERS, if you know anything about me, I don’t work in silos and folks, we do have to save money and
regionalism is somewhat of a dirty word in the state, but I think it can be rebranded to talk about conserving our resources and applying those resources effectively to not only deliver law enforcement services, but ambulance services and fire service.

House Bill 6158, AN ACT EXPANDING AND EXTENDING THE CRISIS INITIATIVE PILOT PROGRAM, folks, diversion is very important to us in law enforcement, diversion of those folks that in law enforcement, we cannot help and that diversion not only goes to the addict, it goes to the family of the addict for support and I think you have maybe three or five times before we actually get somebody to recover from that addiction and help working with that. I’m not sure if it’s a legislative fix here or is it a financial fix in cooperation with DMAS and the state police.

Senate Bill 664, AN ACT CONCERNING THE SALE AND USE OF CONSUMER GRADE FIREWORK, I don’t think there’s any firefighter or law enforcement officer in this room, including myself, that is in favor or expanding -- putting bombs in both children’s hands or adult’s hands. There is no way to regulate that for us and we are always taught as a young police officer that an M-80 is really a quarter stick of dynamite and that is a dangerous piece of unregulated, manufactured gunpowder and fuse that you can put in people’s hands.

House Bill 5152, AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY TO DETERMINE A WAY TO DETECT WHEN A DRIVER IS UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF MARIJUANA, this is a challenging area and I think we’re going to learn from our sister states that already have this. We do have a program to detect this. Presently, we only have 12 troopers
that are qualified in this. It is a two-week training period. It’s very intense and if I’m going to extend that to 900 to 1,000 troopers, we need to talk about this and we need to talk about it quickly and the financial impact it will have to my backfill for troopers and not only troopers, but law enforcement throughout the state.

Proposed Senate Bill 558, AN ACT CONCERNING RAILROAD EXPRESS COMPANY OFFICERS; ladies and gentlemen, it’s an area which it really is undetected for law enforcement. There’s over 300 miles of rail and it needs to be policed.

The final one, an act concerning the intelligence center, putting it back into there, realistically, that’s where it’s going, but I think it needs a facelift, so I think my time is up and I’m looking forward to any questions you may have.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Representative Orange, followed by Senator Osten.

REP. ORANGE (48TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: Good morning.

REP. ORANGE (48TH): Good to see you.

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: Nice to see you, too.

REP. ORANGE (48TH): When we’re talking about we only have 915 officers, how many of those officers are actually troopers or actually road dogs?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: I can get those numbers for you. If I don’t have them today, I will get them to you very soon. The philosophy when I first came on board was to take as many officers, troopers as we
could, put them back on the road, and as many sergeants that we could and put them back on the road, so I will get you those numbers.

REP. ORANGE (48TH): And when we’re talking about 1,248, that was in statute at one time and it came out of statute during the Malloy administration years. This is basically an appropriations matter, but I’m going to ask you these questions anyway. Your overtime budget is way too high, so I would think that if you’re spending money instead on troopers and classes, than we’d be better off than pairing up, double that, triple that in overtime?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: Logically, that’s a correct assumption, but there is a balance that we need to achieve here and the balance would be is how many troopers versus how much overtime is -- can balance from the cost of fringe. The cost of fringe is, I believe, over 100 percent for a trooper, so I’m open to those conversations. Finance in my department has been crunching numbers as much as they can. We’ve went back seven years and we’re relying on the number of troopers and the overtime, so it’s something we are doing presently.

REP. ORANGE (48TH): Okay, and that number was derived many years ago at 1,248 and it took a long time for us to get that through at the time on Public Safety and Appropriations with their help and 915 sworn personnel isn’t really enough.

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: That’s correct, it’s certainly not enough.

REP. ORANGE (48TH): And have you thought in the future of 2022 when you’re going to get a big blast of retirements, are you prepared for that and what
is your long-term goal to achieve the safety of our citizens?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: So we look at the attrition numbers. Presently they’re down almost 300 officers with 45 to come on line. We look at the attrition going forward in several years, including that 2022 date, and actually the 2023 date where even more officers are eligible to retire. That is up to 400 officers, which means half the -- half the complement of the state police can retire. I’ve asked for some robust classes for OPM, but I understand the fiscal note that’s attached to it. Yes, we are preparing and planning for the future.

REP. ORANGE (48TH): Thank you. Let me see, well, I guess that’s about it for now. Thank you.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Thank you. Senator Osten, followed by Senator Hwang.

SEN. OSTEN (19TH): Thank you very much, Commissioner, for coming today.

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: You’re welcome.

SEN. OSTEN (19TH): I’m going to go a little bit deeper into the numbers that Representative Orange was talking about in regards to the number of troopers that we have on line and first, I would like to ask you, how many troopers do you have that are resident troopers right now? Do you know?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: I don’t know, but I’ll get you that information.

SEN. OSTEN (19TH): Okay. I’m going to tell you, I’m a huge fan of the resident trooper program. I think it’s valuable and I think it allows us to disperse officers and allows them to have a real
relationship in some of our smaller communities which do not have the ability to have a municipality police force.

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: And I believe the same thing. That is the epitome of a community policing model. Those officers or troopers that live in the neighborhood that have their children go to the schools, they participate in different activities; that is the epitome of a law enforcement officer with community policing.

SEN. OSTEN (19TH): And I also believe it allows some children to have a positive relationship with men and women in uniform that they may not be able to have if they just see someone coming when there’s a problem. If they don’t see them there to abate that problem, then they don’t realize the actual human nature of someone in a uniform.

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: I absolutely agree.

SEN. OSTEN (19TH): You talked a little bit about the number of people that you have eligible to retire by 2023 of 400. How many people are retiring on a per month basis?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: Well, if I could, I’d give it to you on a fiscal year basis, if you don’t mind.

SEN. OSTEN (19TH): Sure.

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: Because they stagger. My attrition is based in my budget; it’s baked in for about 65 troopers. Realistically, we run at about a 72, 80 trooper rate every fiscal year.

SEN. OSTEN (19TH): So we are about seven months into the fiscal year, so are we saying that we have
another 30 troopers to retire between now and June 30th, give or take?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: I don’t think it will be that high, but yes, we are going to have numerous troopers that retire.

SEN. OSTEN (19TH): So the number of -- And how many troopers do you have that are out on either long-term illness or Worker’s Compensation?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: So we average approximately 60 troopers out of the complement and that includes Worker’s Compensation, it includes light duty assignments, it includes military leave. It includes all those areas where the trooper is not at full duty.

SEN. OSTEN (19TH): So if you have 60 people out right now on a variety of methodologies of leave, that’s going to put you at about 850 right there of people that are available to work on line?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: Approximately, yes.

SEN. OSTEN (19TH): Okay. And you have another 20 or 30 that are going to retire, that wipes out your gains on that 45 number that is going to graduate soon?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: Right away.

SEN. OSTEN (19TH): And if they graduate tomorrow, does that mean that they can -- that -- what is their on-the-job time frame that they are going to under training, so once they graduate from -- is this 45 that have finished both classroom and on-the-job training?
COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: No. Once they come out to be into the field training officer position, that’s at least three months and I think a couple weeks.

SEN. OSTEN (19TH): So if they have three more months, this 45 number does not help you out. When we have the class graduate out of the academy, that does not help us out in regards to either your overtime numbers or relief from some folks that are working, you know, or aren’t on the job right now, so it doesn’t give you much relief at all?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: The gains are wiped out by the loss, so the training troopers, yes.

SEN. OSTEN (19TH): Okay. And my last question on the number of people that we have, where do we stand on the classified list? Is the list still active? Do we have to have a new list? What are we doing with that?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: So there is an active list. There are approximately 83 candidates on that list, give or take a few, because they come in and out of the process. We are actively working with DAS. DAS stepped out of the written test business and we are now exploring different mechanisms for fulfill our state statute to test and to complete a background on a trooper. We expect to offer a test and this could be an unpaid announcement is that we expect a big hiring beginning very soon for troopers.

SEN. OSTEN (19TH): So right now, we don’t have a test that -- we have 83 candidates that may or may not pass the other steps that are required after the written test. I mean, there are a number of steps that have to happen, so we are close to almost a crisis level of people available for you to hire?
COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: No, I wouldn’t use the word crisis. I would say that we’re managing the troops, we’re trying to fill up the troops, and we’re balancing that with overtime to maintain our posture in the public.

SEN. OSTEN (19TH): I’m -- I expected that answer from someone who always looks at ways to accomplish a need and -- but I would say that the legislature should know that you in a situation that we need to start covering positions, so I consider if we don’t get a class going almost right away, we’re getting very low on the number of people that have to respond.

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: And we are preparing to get a class going as soon as we can, beginning the testing period.

SEN. OSTEN (19TH): Which will take nine months to get them on the road?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: It will take at least nine months, yes.

SEN. OSTEN (19TH): Okay. I just want people to understand that it’s nine months after you get people hired to get them on the road.

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: That is correct.

SEN. OSTEN (19TH): So one second on fringe seeing as my colleague brought up fringe, if you were only paying for the fringe for that particular person and not paying our legacy debt, do you know what that fringe cost would be?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: I don’t have the dollar cost for that, but fringe is estimated by OPM and I believe it’s about 105 to 115 percent per trooper.
SEN. Osten (19th): Yeah, I’m very well aware of what it’s -- I think it’s about 113 percent, but that has that -- about 80 percent of that is the legacy debt of tier 1, which ended in 1984. Do you have any troopers on the road right now that were hired in 1984?

Commissioner Rovella: I don't know, but I can get you that number if we do have some.

SEN. Osten (19th): I think we only have about 600 employees in the whole state of Connecticut that were hired in 1984. Most of your people can retire between 20 and 25 years. Just by sheer numbers, that would put them at still on the job some full 15 years after they can retire. I would posit to say that there probably aren’t any. I appreciate your work and I look forward to working with you and I look forward to us having new classes start, at least two new classes, next year. Thank you.

Commissioner Rovella: Thank you.

Rep. Verrengia (20th): Senator, I appreciate that line of questioning and just for the information of the committee, I am in the process of scheduling an informational meeting on February 19th prior to a committee meeting and to invite the commissioner and the director of POST to come and talk about training and a big part of that conversation will be along the lines that you just talked about and I already talked to the commissioner earlier and he’s made a commitment to attend that meeting. Senator Hwang.

SEN. Hwang (28th): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Commissioner, for attending. I want to thank you for your time and your insight that we spent talking about the issue of cyber security, but I
also want to begin by thanking you for your past service in law enforcement.

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: Thank you, Senator.

SEN. HWANG (28TH): It’s the interesting part about the dynamic of cyber security. It’s all around us and we are living in a digital age and there is no going back. What I find very interesting is the stories we’ve heard about encroachment in regards to our data, the Marriott data compromised, the Targets, but what a lot of people don’t fully understand is the fact that our national security has been compromised as well. As I read in recent news reports that, you know, the F35 fighter plane, the Black Hawk helicopter, and the Aegis anti-missile defense. All of that has been compromised and stolen through cyber theft and the other nuance is the fact that everywhere around us, you know, it is pervasive. Saying that, what I find interesting is the fact that there is no national federal cyber security policy and I have, from my research, understood that it has remained a state function. Can you elaborate a little bit more from your work in law enforcement, how law enforcement has been very proactive in this, but also in your new role that encompasses homeland security and public safety and security, where you see this role kind of developing?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: So we had the opportunity to sit down you and I for a good 15, 20 minutes and talk a little more in depth about this and our partners are also included in this, our DAS/BEST partners and every different agency around the state and, you know, we talked about where our private partners come in here, too, because they seem to
have much more robust protection of their proprietary products and that’s something we need to get around the table and talk about. Presently, monthly we talk about different incursions and protection, but that is solely left to each and every agency. Now, we do have a group of troopers that are assigned to the Joint Terrorism Taskforce that do cyber work that work with the FBI and that area is exclusive to the law enforcement. At the division, we do have a cyber information officer who handles security risk for the department. So I think we left each other thinking we have to sit down around the table and put the best minds together and talk about it globally, not just department wide.

SEN. HWANG (28TH): And thank you and I want to compliment former Governor Malloy in his proactiveness in commissioning a cyber security study with former PURA chairman, Art House, and some of the particulars that came out that I want to share with you that’s interesting is the fact that Connecticut state government is under constant cyberattack and in fact, there’s about 4.8 billion connection attempts to our state network and nearly 2 billion of it are blocked, but that means 2.8 billion other encroachments are getting through and embedded into our system. That is one real big concern. I think the other fact is this; that we do not have a centralized IT structure in state government, that each one of our agencies have their own IT structure. There is no unifying concept to handle the aspect of cyber security. Could you kind of share for you from an application, applicability, as well as enforcement and ultimate protection how that kind of a decentralized, individualized system
as we have right now pose in regard to vulnerability?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: So you quoted from Mr. House’s written testimony that I have also reviewed. You know, there’s only one quarterback on a football team and I think you need -- you need centralization of these resources to marshal all the threats that we come across. There are professionals out there in the outside world globally that that’s the only thing they do is attack, attack, attack and they try to make their way in, so I am a proponent of centralization in this factor and I think you are to and it’s a conversation that we need to get in the room on and I’m not one to say, I’m not one to have that ego to say that we should do it. I think we need best practices and I think it has to be taken by the reigns and worked on.

SEN. HWANG (28TH): I think when we hear in state government and I think the cities as well, the other component of the proposed bill is a three-prong approach to incorporate some of our corporate partners in a collaboration of their protection against espionage as well as data privacy and data maintenance -- data protection, share with me and the committee some of the really great work, without naming some of their protocols, obviously, for security purposes, but share how the state could benefit as it has already in some ways the collaboration from the advanced work and the real proactive work of our defense industry and state, as well as our electrical and utility grids, insurance industry, financial services, one of the roles I see in this is the fact that we collaborate with those industries that are very interested in being willing partners and can offer insight. I see this role of
being able to pull that interaction and pull that collaboration together. Could you share some of the really good work that’s being done by businesses in our state and how we can benefit.

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: Senator, I think you just answered your question, very well put, and that’s something that we’ve talked about, working outside of those silos. I shared with you stories from my Hartford police days where I consulted with some of those private industry folks that were in Hartford and that is the way we get things done. Folks have different aspects of protection, different data sources they have to protect in the private sector and those are the conversations we had and I’m looking forward to a lot of those conversations because there is vulnerability.

SEN. HWANG (28TH): We are constantly under attack in this arena. I think in some ways we choose to not see it, choose to say it doesn’t happen to us, but the fact from my study and my understanding about the peril of cyber security is simply this; they get to choose who they’re going to attack and so as a result of that premise, it is incumbent on us as a state agency, as businesses, and as individuals and our personal cyber security, to always be vigilant and always be prepared and I see the incredible department that you’re heading to be a lead on that because it touches all of us, but the ultimate perspective is public safety and security and I can’t think of a better place for that to be a centralized operation to protect the wellbeing of our state. So thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for being here as well, sir.
REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Thank you, Senator. Up next we have Representative Boyd, followed by Senator Winfield.

REP. BOYD (50TH): Thank you, Mr. Vice-Chairman, and thank you Commissioner. Are you still designee or have you --

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: Yes, we’re waiting next week.

REP. BOYD (50TH): All right, well, congratulations on your appointment and I think the entire committee looks forward to working with you. Just a few questions about some things and you may not have the answer for them now, yeah, the prior commissioner had made some strategic decisions dealing with some of the divisions, for example, in the division of homeland security, emergency management. Under the prior commissioner, the homeland security aspect had moved out of the division and was handled at the commissioner level. As you’re settling your staff assignments, are you envisioning that DMAS deputy commissioner will be the homeland security advisor or is that a role that you’re looking to take on or just some thoughts on it.

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: So presently as the commissioner, there is a deputy commissioner in charge of emergency management and homeland security. I will be designated the homeland security advisor and I will designate three -- four deputies, I’m sorry, just in case I am not available.

REP. BOYD (50TH): Okay. You know, there was -- we have limited resources and we need to be efficient, but the work that the division DMAS does is brutally important to municipalities. You know, I represent
some of the smallest communities in the state, you know, and have volunteer emergency management directors, constables, regional state police troops, volunteer fire departments and that -- the work that DMAS does with the municipalities is vital and making sure that that division is strong and effective is a huge priority for smaller communities in maybe in other parts of the state. Do you envision continuing the fusion center and the role that that and a lot of cyber security stuff that the good senator had brought up is a key part of the, kind of the multi-jurisdictional piece and do you see that role expanding?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: Absolutely, and for some reason CTIC was taken out of emergency management moved over to state police. The colonel and I have already had conversations with Deputy Commissioner Regina Rush-Kittle to place them back into emergency management where they belong, but as I said in my opening statement, I just think they need a facelift. You know, coming out of Hartford, we gobbled up as much information and we sent it even faster. The information is knowledge to folks who need it and can rely on it, so I just think it needs a little facelift. We’re talking about different endeavors to go with it, but yes, it will be -- it will remain the same.

REP. BOYD (50TH): Yeah, and I -- and that’s -- and I think it’s the future as the good Senator brought up as well. Everybody on this committee has a deep respect for the state police and want to strengthen because public safety is important. You know, one of the concerns that sits in the back of a lot of our heads is we want to make sure that DESPP as a whole just doesn’t become completely centered around
the state police, that, you know, some of the other divisions, homeland security, fire prevention control, OSAT, and all that are vitally important to what we do here, so you know, I’m not necessarily looking for a comment, but just, you know, from the committee that having a robust, well-rounded DESPP/POST consolidation years ago is really, really important and, you know, something that this committee I know has a lot of interest in it. I’m sure it’s something you’ve heard already a little bit.

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: Well, yeah, and it’s not -- and I think it deserves comment, if I may.

REP. BOYD (50TH): Please.

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: You know, when I first walked into the job, I heard we had four -- five orphans and the Connecticut State Police, so I walked in and I know now we have five orphans and we have one stepchild being the state police and if I could go back just briefly, you could legislate 1,500 troopers for me. The realistic is finances and how do we acquire those, how do we recruit them. More and more and more, like every chief will tell you, is best. So the five different divisions, and we are talking about what is our outward face, our outward voice to the public, so that is something you will see probably fairly soon because those other five need to be exposed and actually publicized because they do great work and they’re stressed, too.

REP. BOYD (50TH): Yeah, well, and I appreciate your comments on that because it’s a -- it’s a department that we ask as a state a lot to do and you have a lot of moving parts and, you know, I appreciate your
comment. Last question is regarding House Bill 552, which you did not have some testimony on regarding the auxiliary state trooper program and kind of revisiting that and my understanding is we still have, I don’t know if a handful or a few, how many auxiliary --

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: A couple.

REP. BOYD (50TH): You have a couple?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: Yeah.

REP. BOYD (50TH): Okay. And the program stopped taking new admission, I think, in the early -- in the early ‘90’s, is that --

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: If you say so, yeah. The colonel and I have had some brief discussions on that, very brief.

REP. BOYD (50TH): Okay, and just, you know, that bill is just looking to have that discussion. With costs being what they are, there are some role for a future auxiliary program that a number of municipalities have found and I know we’re severely limited by what, you know, somebody can do with training and POSTs and what have you, but, you know, just looking to see is there an effective way to revitalize that program in a safe manner for participants in that, so I’d love to have that conversation maybe down the road, as well.

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: And that conversation we will have, because you know, those are the other folks with the experience walking out the door and that is troubling.

REP. BOYD (50TH): Thank you for your time. I appreciate it. Mr. Vice-President.
COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: You’re welcome.


SEN. WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. Good morning. I just have maybe one or two, maybe three, questions about your support for Bill 5152, which is the bill that -- it’s about detecting impairment by cannabis, so I think I heard you say that you 12 officers or so who currently are able to do what is necessary. Is that correct?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: Yeah, it’s a more in-depth training, it’s a two-week training, and yes, it’s only 12 at this point that can actually detect it, even though the entire -- every trooper is trained in drunk driving and drug detection, there’s 12 that really specialize in it.

SEN. WINFIELD (10TH): And is there something about that training that you think is not good enough for what needs to be done? And let me -- I don’t want to string you along, so I’m trying to understand -- What it sounds like to me is you need to be able to have more people able to do what those 12 can do and this bill doesn’t suggest that. This bill seems to suggest a how do you do it, which you seem to be already able to do, so what I want to know is, is there something about the way that they’re trained that you think is inadequate or is that you need the resources to do more?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: So the detection is a two-week course where we actually take a trooper off the road for two weeks to give him that training. We need to do more and there is a fiscal note to it and I need to qualify more troopers in that area and if
you have 1,000 troopers, you’re fairly going to say I’m going to have to give at least 500 that training.

SEN. WINFIELD (10TH): So again, I guess, and I’m not trying to be obtuse here, but -- so supporting this bill doesn’t get you there, right? This bill requires that that the DESKPP does a study of how do we do what your 12 concurrently do, so as this conversation moves forward, am I under -- should I be under the understanding that you would be looking to change it so that we build in resources and not just do a study?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: No, the study is applicable and we can lay out all the different aspects to it, but yes, there is a fiscal note at the end, so if you do go do it, I just need some prep time to get settled.

SEN. WINFIELD (10TH): I’m a little confused. Okay, so there’s nothing wrong with the training that the 12 have, right?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: There is not.

SEN. WINFIELD (10TH): The 12 are good?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: It’s just very --

SEN. WINFIELD (10TH): Why are we doing a study then?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: I’m not sure we need a study, but if you’re going to legalize marijuana in any way, I just need prep time and financial resources to train troopers in the detection.

SEN. WINFIELD (10TH): Okay, that’s what I was getting -- that’s what I was trying to get at
because it seemed to me that you were, if you’re correct, you were there in terms of the ability to do what’s necessary, you just don’t have the numbers you need, the prep time, you need the resources in terms of money and all of those things and I just wanted to be clear about what your position was.

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: Yes, but I do have to represent all the other law enforcement agencies, too, that will have the same mountain to climb.

SEN. WINFIELD (10TH): Yeah, thank you.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Thank you, Senator. Next up Ranking Member Representative Sredzinski.

REP. SREDZINSKI (112TH): Thank you, Mr. Vice-Chairman, and thank you Commissioner-Designee for being here today and taking the time to answer some questions. The first, I’m going to follow up on what Senator Winfield was asking about Bill 5152. My first question is what’s the primary difference between the four-hour drunk driver portion versus the two-week class and you don’t have to get into specifics, but basically help the committee understand what the difference is and how the two-week class is so much better?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: Well, each trooper is -- has that training for the drunk driving and the drug driving. The advanced course goes far more in-depth and if I may, I much more prefer to bring an expert in front of you to explain all the differences.

REP. SREDZINSKI (112TH): Got you, and that’s one of the reasons that I was supporting the study of it was because there may be options out there, somewhere between the four-hour drunk driving and the two-week class. Is that a possibility?
COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: Right now, we’re taking a quick look at some of the other states that have legalized marijuana and there are quite few states that rely on the training that we -- the two-week training that we’re training troopers for.

REP. SREDZINSKI (112TH): Is that two-week class involve determining what level of, let’s call it THC, is considered too impaired to drive?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: That would be a drug test based on urine or blood right now, so that is something worth exploring.

REP. SREDZINSKI (112TH): So at this time, we don’t have that level set?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: We do not, that I know of.

REP. SREDZINSKI (112TH): Would you say that that’s something that’s worth looking into?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: Yes.

REP. SREDZINSKI (112TH): And also would it be or does it exist now where if someone is presumably high on marijuana or cannabis that they would be determined to be under the influence and unable to operate the vehicle?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: I believe it exists now. I’d just have to check.

REP. SREDZINSKI (112TH): Okay. Thank you very much. The other question I have is on 6155, I wholeheartedly agree with your points, especially when you say that regionalization is a tremendous tool, but it needs to be done correctly to ensure efficiencies are realized and I would add even that we need to make sure that we don’t jeopardize public
safety in any way, as well, so just wanted to ask, as this process moves forward and the organizations start meeting on this, do we have your cooperation in working together toward a solution?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: Absolutely.

REP. SREDZINSKI (112TH): Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Vice-Chair.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Thank you, Representative, for a second time. Representative Orange.

REP. ORANGE (48TH): Thank you, Mr. Vice-Chair for the second opportunity to address the commissioner. Let’s get back to the intelligence center unit. You did say that originally when homeland security was established under Governor Rell, the job that we’re talking about here was in homeland security at that time, legislated to be there?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: Yes.

REP. ORANGE (48TH): Now that the agencies have consolidated, which I was never a big fan of due to various reasons of actually knowing what was going on each little division, we kind of were put in the dark for a while as to what was going on, now this position now sits where in DESPP?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: Are you talking about the homeland advisor or the CTIC?

REP. ORANGE (48TH): CTIC.

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: CTIC now sits at the state police.

REP. ORANGE (48TH): And are you going to be -- it was legislatively supposed to be under homeland security under Governor Rell, how that moved out
into the state police is like beyond me because it wasn’t legislated to come out. It was legislated to be in homeland security. Now that these commissions have come together under one umbrella, I would expect that this would stay in homeland security under the homeland security division of DESPP, so, so why has it been moved and why isn’t it under homeland security is my question?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: Well, you’re asking me the reasoning from a previous commissioner why she moved it from one to the other from, emergency management and homeland security to the state police, of which I just can’t answer. So when I first came on board five weeks ago, this was on the table already for conversation. It will be moved, but I want to make sure it gets moved with a focus and a facelift about moving information and with that, they may go into some different areas, but it will be moved back into emergency management and homeland security where it belongs and therefore I don’t see it needs a legislative adjustment. I will take care of that.

REP. ORANGE (48TH): Okay. That’s what I heard from the past commissioner as well and it did not happen, so that’s why this legislation is here, basically to ensure that it gets moved once and for all where it was legislated to be under Governor Rell’s administration. When you talk about a focus and a facelift, exactly what are you -- what are you talking about for a focus and a facelift?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: Well, generally speaking, I found that information moves a little too slow. It should move far quickly -- more quickly inside -- moving inside and being sent out to the local police departments or any other agency. I also think it
needs to take some school security aspect on board, too. So moving forward, those are just two of the areas that we want to improve. It’s actually how information moves. It moves far too slowly for me.

REP. ORANGE (48TH): And that’s under the state police it moves too slowly?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: It’s been there in the state police.

REP. ORANGE (48TH): Okay, so I look forward to having this moved back to where it’s supposed to be before our committee deadline. Is that reasonable so that we don’t have to move the bill along?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: What’s your deadline?

REP. ORANGE (48TH): What’s the deadline -- I believe you’ll be back, but it is in March, probably the middle to end of March.

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: I’m sure we could report back to you that’s been completed by then.

REP. ORANGE (48TH): Thank you.

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: Sure.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Thank you, Representative Orange. Representative Hayes.

REP. HAYES (51ST): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good morning, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: Good morning.

REP. HAYES (51ST): I’ll try to keep it very brief, but I understand when you came in that you were in support of Senate Bill 558, which is the Connecticut railroad police?
COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: Yes.

REP. HAYES (51ST): Okay. If you could tell me what do you think their job function would be and what type of training would it require for that?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: So presently there’s probably about over 300 miles of track that runs through just about everybody’s jurisdiction and we’re referring to the freight traffic that moves throughout the state and interstate. I would say that the officers must be POST certified, which brings all the rules and requirements of all the municipalities in line and I think a big component has to be a training component and a law enforcement component to protect larcenies from the freight industry as they move through the different municipalities.

REP. HAYES (51ST): Thank you and I don’t want to put you on the spot, but do you think there would be any cost to the state?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: I don’t think so unless there will be a cost to POST, which we accept anyway.

REP. HAYES (51ST): Thank you and just one more, I have to assume that during your career, you’ve done a number of hiring processes?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: Oh, yes.

REP. HAYES (51ST): Okay. I’m looking for your opinion, sir, on House Bill 6952, AN ACT PROHIBITING POLYGRAPH EXAMINATIONS AS A CONDITION OF EMPLOYMENT AS A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER.

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: So I think we talk about reducing barriers here and if I may, can I start a little farther at the beginning of the process?
REP. HAYES (51ST): Please do.

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: So reducing barriers, we lose most of our candidates either because they don’t show for the test or at the testing procedure and I mention that DAS was out of the testing business, meaning the monitored written score testing. We’re moving to a pass/fail or we’re going to move to a written questionnaire, so as the background progresses, polygraphs are a big factor in that and we try to avoid any conflict of interest or if a candidate has an objection to polygraphs, but it is a check and balance of the background. It’s not only done for incoming officers, but it’s also done for lateral moves of officers to other departments and it’s also done for chiefs of police when they move from one agency to another, I can attest to that. But I think it’s a necessary part of the background procedure.

REP. HAYES (51ST): Thank you. So in your opinion, would you be opposed to eliminating polygraphs?

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: I would be, yes.

REP. HAYES (51ST): Thank you.

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: You’re welcome.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Thank you, Representative Hayes. Any other questions for the commissioner-designee? Commissioner, I just wanted to let you know our committee deadline is March 21st, but obviously be in front of us in the next week or two.

COMMISSIONER ROVELLA: I’m sure I will be, but March 21st is easily attained.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): So seeing no other questions, sir, thank you for being here. Look forward to
seeing you soon. Up next, we have Representative Zawistowski.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Thank you very much.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Good morning.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Good morning, Chairmen Verrengia, Bradley, Ranking Members Sredzinski and Hwang, and distinguished members of the committee. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity with a couple of guests, who I will introduce in a minute, to speak in favor of H.B. 5156. During the 2017 session, a bill that came through this committee was overwhelmingly approved by the House and the Senate and became law. It required the training of state and local police officers for incidents involving juveniles with autism spectrum disorder and nonverbal learning disorder. What this proposed bill does today was to extend that to include other first responders, including fire departments and medical personnel and the first bill that came through provided that these services, the training, would be at no cost to the towns or to the departments and this would continue the same thing. The two -- I have submitted written testimony on this, so you don’t need to hear from me. My guests here are more important to hear from at this point. I have with me Jill Caron. She is co-founder of the FECS, which is the Foundation for Exceptional Children of Suffield, and spearheaded something called Project Keep Me Safe for autism. She’ll explain it a little bit more. I also have Amy Ruchi from Suffield who is a parent and I’m going to hand this over to Jill. Thank you.

JILL CARON: Hi, thank you so much for hearing us today. I am Jill Caron and my partner is Sue Davis.
We both have children diagnosed on the spectrum. We are the co-founders of the Foundation for Exceptional Children of Suffield, which is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to create awareness, provide information and support to the Suffield residents with special needs. The first initiative of FECS was Project Keep Me Safe. The purpose of Project Keep Me Safe was to educate Suffield’s first responders in the interaction and response to emergency situations involving children diagnosed with ASD and to provide information to the community members, parents, caregivers on the wandering and elopement risk for children on the spectrum and strategies to maintain their safety.

Project Keep Me Safe has been funded completely by our foundation and has trained emergency personnel in several towns throughout Connecticut and we have also trained the firefighters and paramedics at Bradley International Airport. We are writing in support, and I’m here today in support, of the House Bill 5156. When Sue’s son was younger, he was prone to wander. He wandered away from every school within our district he was attending, even though he had a one-to-one paraprofessional with him at all times. He wandered away from the family while vacationing in South Carolina at a beach and there were several other situations of elopement. Any of these situations could have developed into a dangerous life-threatening situation in which the police may have been called to intervene or it could have turned into a search and rescue mission. Handling a crisis with a child, any child, is difficult, however understanding how to intercede and work with children with ASD is unique and
requires specialized knowledge of how to engage, work, and secure a child on the spectrum.

Many children with ASD may react to emergency first responders in a way that seems combative. They may run from the very person who is sent to help them. Therefore, it is crucial to teach first responders how to identify someone with autism and how to best help them in an emergency situation. One in 59 children are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, which impairs their communication, social skills, and sometimes their cognitive. Making first responders educated is crucial. We cannot urge you enough to support this bill. There is nothing more important than protecting our children from the inherent dangers that come with their disability and training the first responders who may have to act in support of families and interact with the children on the spectrum in high stressful situations or life-threatening situations. We are asking everyone to fully support the enactment of House Bill 5156. We would also like to say that we, our foundation, has granted Connecticut last year a $5,000 grant for first responders to write in and we’ll pay for the training because we think it’s very important that these departments gets trained.

AMY RUCHI: My name is Amy Ruchi. My son is also on the autism spectrum. I’m here in support of Jill and in support of this bill. When she called me last night because Sue couldn’t make it, I immediately contacted the teachers at my son’s school, to which they immediately replied and said that you should be aware that there are anxiety issues amongst this population that most people are not aware of and that they are prone to a fight or flight response associated with that anxiety. So
along with that, they have sensory needs. They’re affected by tone, sirens, touch, flashing lights. These could all be triggers. It’s very important that first responders are trained to learn that when these children who take things very literally and can be very rigid are not being noncompliant, they’re just not capable of communicating. It would be as simple as providing touch pads or vision pads with the first responders to help in those situations.

My own son is what they call selectively mute. My husband says he just doesn’t like to talk to anyone, but the truth is that he gets so anxious when he’s meeting someone new, he can’t actually speak and to have someone to be able to say is there someone we can call or someone be able to show him a board and be able to say how are you feeling, what’s going on so that he could point to something would be so effective. Thank you.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Thank you and we do ask that you support this bill. Their wellbeing -- Like the last bill, there will be no fiscal note and these ladies have done an incredible job on increasing awareness and working with the police com at this point and other first responders in our area on education, letting them know, you know, that these programs are available, so Thank you.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Thank you for your testimony today and thank you for your work on this issue. Are there any questions? Representative Sredzinski.

REP. SREDZINSKI (112TH): Thank you, Mr. Vice-Chairman. Thank you Representative Zawistowski and your constituents who came up to testify on this bill. As someone who has a son on the spectrum as
well, I appreciate the efforts. I do have a few questions, though. Do you see this as a program that would apply to anyone getting new training or would this apply to everyone who is currently certified and would have to get continuing education in order to meet the standard?

JILL CARON: I think it’s important to initially get everybody trained initially. We trained Suffield last year and they’ve asked us for a retraining. I sat through the class probably six times and always learn something new and I have -- I live with it every day. I would be happy if we could get everybody initially trained and then look at maybe an ongoing for the future. Our training we bring has a unique perspective of the police train the police, fire and paramedics train fire and paramedics, and all the trainers have children on the spectrum so they know the job and living with a child on the spectrum, so we find that very valuable with the trainers.

REP. SREDZINSKI (112TH): Thank you, and the trainings that you do, are they with volunteer staff, career staff, or both?

JILL CARON: I would say both, we’ve done both.

REP. SREDZINSKI (112TH): Very good, and how would you address the issue of being able to cover it statewide? Obviously, you know, you’re part of the state, but if the Greenwich fire department or the New London, you know, fire department wanted to get trained, how do you envision that happening?

JILL CARON: So the grant we set up, we partnered with it’s called ALEC, it’s out of Massachusetts, so the training is $175 dollars a day to get the
training to a department. Obviously, there’s cost to the department for overtime and paying the staff to be there, but we fully try to cover the cost of the actual training. So the grant we set up for all of Connecticut, we have trained in Greenwich, and there are different trainers located all over the state, so they could call in or get in contact with us and we would pay for their training for them, because we just think as many people as we could get trained is beneficial.

REP. SREDZINSKI (112TH): And that was part of the -- that was part of the challenge last year with the police bill, but we have a centralized area with POSTs and the state police that we know that all officers are going through one of those two formats and obviously with the fire department and emergency medical services, it’s a little bit more broad and there’s a little bit more, you know, shift in differences, so -- but I thank you for bringing this to the committee, I appreciate it. Thank you again, Representative Zawistowski, for bringing this to our attention and we’ll see it through the process. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Thank you, Representative. Any other questions from colleagues? Thank you for your time today. Thank you for your testimony.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Thank you.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Okay, next up is Representative McGorty. He is not here, so we’re going to go next to Jay Dicine.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD-DICINE: Good afternoon. My name is Judith Rothschild-Dicine. I’m from the chief state’s attorney’s office representing the division
Thank you for the time this morning, to the chair and vice-chair, and to the members of this committee. I’m here to speak in great support of the concept of House Bill No. 6955, which bill is AN ACT ADOPTING THE INTERNATIONAL PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE, and we respectfully recommend a joint favorable report from this committee. I want to start by recognizing that in our commitment to the public health and safety, prevention of injury and illness is far superior to any response. As such, since 2013, the Division of Criminal Justice, myself in particular, have actively participated in development of what we have in Connecticut as a state health improvement plan. This is a plan which is led by the department of public health and it is a plan that addresses and identifies those primary factors which are negatively affecting the overall wellbeing of our public. It proposes effective and achievable policy and program changes to reverse those factors and take steps to implement them by the year 2020.

This SHIP is a statewide plan and it is powered by a coalition of over 600 organizations and individuals from diverse backgrounds, both traditional and nontraditional to the Public Health who have invested time, expertise, and great effort in making a safer and healthier Connecticut a reality. This is all directly related to this bill. The planning and action teams of the SHIP have from the onset decided that environmental hazards arise from substandard housing and are a primary factor negatively affecting our public health and wellbeing. We studied our state medical and injury data and we studied many expertise pieces from around the nation and the world correlating things
like lead poisoning and chronic and acute asthma hospitalizations to detrimental housing.

We decided that these harmful effects are also discriminatorily affecting and afflicting the most vulnerable populations in our state, children, elders, and disabled who spend a majority of their time indoors and also, those from socioeconomic households that are living in substandard housing conditions. Therefore and with widespread support, the SHIP coalition proposed the adoption of a state property maintenance code to counteract that influence. The goal: health equity for the state of Connecticut and we will have a related effect. Maintained properties are economically efficient. They avert loss in property value and they help the surrounding communities by decreasing the risk of criminal activity, which nestles very well in dilapidated areas.

To let us address why we should have yet another code to address these issues in Connecticut, the reason is our aging housing stock, which is primarily, at least 45 percent, built before 1950, brings challenges to the people who reside in it, to health safety, and also energy efficiency and most of our people do not live in new construction. Most of our people in the state of Connecticut live in these older houses, yet we have no effective code or standard that addresses maintenance of property after it is built. We have the state building code which addresses new construction, we have the state fire and prevention codes which only apply to fire and prevention issues in housing, and we have the state health code, but the state health code primarily deals with matters regarding septic and food service and other things which the public
health departments are generally enforcing, but they have little currently on the books relating to maintenance of properties.

The closest thing we have to maintenance of property standards in Connecticut is Chapter 833A, which is public enforcement and health and safety standards and that has been enacted since 1949 with amendments and is already a mandate delegated to local public health departments. However, that particular act is so antiquated that it is inefficient and ineffective and therefore, the division of criminal justice, which has long supported the adoption of a state property maintenance code, respectfully suggests that the code that we should have is one updated, one based on national juried review of code standards. The International Property Maintenance Code from the International Code Council is such a code. It can replace Chapter 833A.

We recommend that you do that in some language substitution for the bill before you, however, passing it in concept because it is clear that the effect of unsafe and ill-maintained properties is -- we have preventable injuries and illnesses to people. We have loss of economic value of property and we have expense, great medical and personal expense, which data proportionally -- disproportionally affects those in our disadvantaged communities. The Division of Criminal Justice is offering its help in any way that we can and this testimony and going forward with any language that you would like us to work on with you and any supplemental information and I would add that there has been already three drafts of the State Property Maintenance Code, which was a correlated effort of several agencies and organizations over the last ten
years and we’ve just about finished a third draft of a proposed State Property Maintenance Code based on the ICC Property Maintenance Code. Please note that it was an open door invitation to organizations, private and public, and we did have at the table the Department of Administrator Services who has filed testimony again today in concept and agreement with the passing of such an act going over to the public health side. We had building and fire marshals’ offices from the state and local agreeing in concept to the need for this bill. We have the Department of Public Health at the table, also in agreement for this bill, generally who has filed their own testimony. The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection has been at the table, the Environmental Justice Unit, the Department of Housing, Connecticut fire marshals, building officials, directors of health, the Connecticut Association of Housing Code Officials, zoning officials, realtors, landlords, tenants, legal aid, the hoarding working group, our office and others.

We see the need. We have a gap. The gap is we don’t have a standard for maintaining property in Connecticut. We need that. That is where our people are being hurt and that is a preventable injury and illness to which we speak. We thank you for your time and welcome questions.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Thank you. Questions from the committee? Senator Bradley.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Thank you. Good evening, Madam State Attorney, nice to see you here again.

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD-DICINE: Thank you.
SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Quick question and kind of --
and we had an opinion to speak about this
previously, but to play, I guess, devil’s advocate
to some degree in the ability to clarify maybe some
questions that we might all have, what would you say
to the argument that this might create an
encumbrance to landlords and people who are looking
to invest in dilapidated communities? Would this in
essence criminalize any possible behavior or make it
an extra encumbrance to be able to fix these
dilapidated homes?

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD-DICINE: So as to the landlords,
we actually have great support from a number of
landlord organizations who filed on a similar bill
in 2017, 5177. They see it as a help in that would
uniform their requirements in the state. Many own
over municipal lines, so they have a different
standard depending on where they buy property, which
doesn’t make it easy for them to meet those
standards, so -- and as to the good landlords, and
we have many in our state, thank goodness, those
landlords that do maintain their property are
already afflicted by their neighbors that don’t and
it drags down their property values.

And as to those that seek to invest, we’re not
changing the obligation to maintain property by
changing our state policy to adoption of this
particular maintenance code should we do that. We
have statutes on the books and regulations on the
books which already require maintenance. They’re
just overly broad and they don’t specify in what way
these provisions need to be complied with. The
Property Maintenance Code, which is not a very large
book, this is actually the 2015 version of it,
compared to the other codes we’ve adopted in
Connecticut, it’s quite skinny. This is just a clarification on how to do it in a prescriptive way so that it’s clear enough that it will protect the people living there. So we see it as a help overall and we recognize that organizations enforcement and administration of codes generally need more support to do that correctly and that landlords generally could use support in accomplishing the goals of full compliance, but the law already requires safety in these buildings. It’s just a better tool to do it.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): And what would you say to the argument creating such uniformity strips municipalities or cities with the ability to be able to regulate and to specify what they think is necessary in their towns or cities?

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD-DICINE: Well, I think that we have the Municipal Powers Act, which continues to allow the municipalities to regulate things that wouldn’t be covered by the state code. There was some growing pains, as I understand it, when we adopted a safe building code similar to that state fire code and prevention code and also state public health code, but the Municipal Powers Act has resulted in municipalities, about a third of them in the state, having no housing code whatsoever, so in those areas, there are people not necessarily as protected as I think we all would like to see at a minimal standard.

But the municipalities would still be entitled, if we adopt this code, to retain their blight ordinances, which is promulgated under a second state statute and so I don’t think it takes away all their powers and we have invited the municipalities and many have participated by sending local
representatives into the discussions and enactment of a proposed state property maintenance code, so many are already in agreement that this is a good idea. Special reference to Mayor Harp of the city of New Haven, who filed testimony in support yesterday, and other mayors have also been agreeable to the concept of it and so, you know, we welcome everyone at the table still should there be discussion, should this bill pass, of what language would be appropriate for a statewide provision and it could be a minimum code and perhaps there could be authority left to the municipalities to add provisions to it should it be met appropriate. All the language is yet to be considered and agreed to, but we think that the blight and the provisions of the code leave the cities and the towns great choices in how we are going to do this provision. Thank you.

REP. PAOILLO (97TH): Thank you, Senator. Any other questions from committee members? Judith, thank you and thank you for your work as a representative from New Haven and someone that has served on the council there for a long time. Thank you for your work with law enforcement and fire marshals and our Livable City Initiative, building enforcement officials to really improve the quality of housing for our residents, so thank you for your work.

JUDITH ROTHSCILD-DICINE: Thank you very much, sir, I appreciate that.

REP. PAOILLO (97TH): Thank you.

JUDITH ROTHSCILD-DICINE: Have a good day.
REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): We’re going to now alternate between the two lists. First up on the public list, Rick Hart.

RICK HART: Good afternoon, Chairman Bradley -- Verrengia, ranking members of the Public Safety and Security Committee, and other members. My name is Rick Hart. I represent 4,000 career firefighters in the state of Connecticut for the Uniformed Professional Firefighter Service. I’m also a deputy chief in the City of Waterbury Fire Department. I’m here to testify in support of House Bill 5156, the autism education program, House Bill 5660, which is requirement for buildings with truss construction to be labeled as such, 6384, which is a tech change to the statute that was passed two years ago concerning the cancer, the Firefighter Cancer Relief Fund. I’ve also submitted testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 664, which is a consumer fireworks bill.

Very briefly, I, too, had a son that’s on the autism spectrum, so that bill is very personal to me. He also wandered when he was young and to have that phone call come and your child is missing is really a kick in the gut, so this is an important program that could be easily solved for first responders. On the fire side, I’ll speak to incorporating the ALEC training, the Autism and Law Enforcement Coalition training into Firefighter 1 that is taught throughout the state in the nine regional fire schools as well as the fire academy and it also could be incorporated as continuing education on the career side. We do monthly and quarterly training, so it could be incorporated into that so that we do cover all firefighters in the state of Connecticut.
The truss construction bill, the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health is replete with firefighter fatality reports on truss construction collapses under fire conditions. I understand the engineering aspect of truss construction, but unfortunately fire is unpredictable and these engineered numbers that are given as far as the stability and integrity of truss construction are best guess estimates for firefighters. So we’re proposing substitute language that would incorporate the plan review process and preplanning process in the fire service that these buildings that are identified to have truss construction that the information is placed in the computer-aided dispatch systems of the municipalities so that when an address pops up, an alert is sent out that the building has truss construction. This would allay the fears of having a big placard on the outside of buildings identifying them as having truss construction which would have an adverse effect probably on real estate values, etc.

Finally, the cancer deductions was just an oversight on the committee’s part that put the bill together. What it would do was allow for insurance in testing -- insurance deductibles and testing fees be paid out of the insurance of the Firefighter Cancer Relief Fund so that there is no out-of-pocket expenses. With that, I’ll take any questions.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Thank you. Questions from colleagues? Seeing none, Rick, thank you.

RICK HART: Okay, thank you.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Up next, we have Representative Pavalock. We will call Representative Cummings.
REP. CUMMINGS (74TH): Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee. I am here today with my alderman, Michael DiGiovancarlo from the great city of Waterbury, to talk about Bill 5550. I’m going to give my time to Alderman DiGiovancarlo.

MICHAEL DIGIOVANCARLO: Good afternoon. Thank you for having me. My name is Mike DiGiovancarlo. I’m a 13-year veteran of the Waterbury Police Department and I’m also an alderman from the city of Waterbury. I came here to speak in favor House Bill 5550. The current statute of 1412 for unregistered vehicles is vague when it comes to out of state plates. The statute, I’m not reading it verbatim, but the statute reads that a person that comes to our state has 60 days to register the vehicle once they claim residency. We feel that those words right there create a pretty big loophole as to when a person is supposed to register that vehicle within 60 days. You take a Connecticut resident who is 30 days expired and you can add the other ten days, we pull that vehicle over, we’re most likely issuing the ticket. We could tow the vehicle if we’d like to tow the vehicle, yet the out of town offender, that is basically purposefully avoiding our tax laws, avoiding our statutes, he can drive six months, one year, two years, and we’re not able to tow that vehicle. The residency, we believe, is 60 days in the statute should set the residency.

The person should not set the residency in our state. The statute -- Them being here 60 says, their vehicle should set that and that would give us a huge advantage to enforce an unregistered vehicle. There’s insurance issues that if you have a New York plate in the city for two years, one year, and they were to get an accident, hit one of our Connecticut
residents, there is a possibility that that insurance company may not even cover that charge or that crash, excuse me, so you have an innocent victim who gets hit by a car that should be registered in the state of Connecticut, it should be insured in the state of Connecticut, now could be a victim of possible consequences of being able to go after them.

So we feel that 60 days is the magic number and that vehicle is not on register, that vehicle should be towed, those plates should be sent back to the state that they reside in or they came from and that vehicle should have to be made whole in the state of Connecticut, whether through a hold, a tow-hold to where they get the car registered and insured in Connecticut because we feel like right now as the way the statute reads, we feel that there’s a giant loophole and to get around it, so that’s all I have for you. I just wanted to let you know that the 60 days, we believe, it’s the statute should dictate what a residency is and we believe we need your help with that. It’s also obviously for obvious reasons, they are obviously, you know, getting around our property car taxes and it’s an ongoing thing. They come in, they stay here for years, they put their children in our school system which we have no problem, I have no problem paying my taxes to educate anyone, but I’m a firm believer that if you come into our city or you come into our state, you should follow the rules and follow the protocol just like everybody else does. Thank you.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Thank you, Officer, thank you, Alderman, and thank you for your work, your dual roles, and thank you, Representative. Thank
you for your testimony today. Representative Sredzinski.

REP. SREDZINSKI (112TH): Thank you, Mr. Vice-Chairman, so just out of curiosity, what do you feel would be the biggest solution that would be achieved by the actual removal of the plate and not just a summons or a ticket?

MICHAEL DIGIOVANCARLO: The biggest solution, I believe you now have a Connecticut plate that can be -- even if our LPRs hit it, it can actually tell you eventually if the plate is suspended due to no insurance, you do have that ability right away. You also have the ability to collect the taxes for each town. This is a statewide issue. You have a -- For the state, you have the loss of revenue on registration, the loss of revenue on emissions. For the cities, you have the -- and small towns, you have a loss of revenue for your tax collecting. It’s a humongous problem in Waterbury. I can take you up and down any street and you’ll see the, you know, it’s basically it’s fraud. In my mind, you know, you’re cheating -- you’re cheating the city, you’re cheating the state, so -- but I think pulling that plate, you now have to get that plate registered in Connecticut.

REP. SREDZINSKI (112TH): Oh, right, so right now as it is, you know, an officer will issue a ticket or a summons or some sort of a fine, but they leave the plate on there?

MICHAEL DIGIOVANCARLO: Correct.

REP. SREDZINSKI (112TH): Even though -- Are you envisioning this be out of state and in state, so if you vehicle is not registered, then the Connecticut
officer would have the authority to take whatever plate it is and, you know, bring it back to headquarters or whatever it may be?

MICHAEL DIGIOVANCARLO: Well, I, just so I understand the question, are you saying if someone’s just traveling through our state? Are you saying that or are you saying this is basically a resident thing that if we have now locked onto that car, it’s been there 60 days, it’s been there 90 days, it’s been there 120 days, yes, that 60 days should claim their residency, that plate should be pulled. Our Connecticut plates, we’ll see the unregistered car with a Connecticut plate, the unregistered car, the uninsured car. Our LPRs will be out -- license plate readers would be out there hitting on them. Right now, we have cars that we don’t even know, from a safety standpoint, we don’t even know who is in some of these vehicles, so.

REP. SREDZINSKI (112TH): Understood. So thank you very much. Thank you, Representative Cummings, for attending and bringing the expert testimony. Thank you, Mr. Vice-Chair.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Thank you, Representative. Senator Champagne.

SEN. CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Thank you. How would you deal with students and those who own property in other states, so the basically snow birds?

MICHAEL DIGIOVANCARLO: Snow birds, as long as they’re not -- the 60 days, as long as they can prove they are in another state and they actually live there and they’re only up for those months, that’s something that can be proved. You can -- You can -- I own property in South Carolina. I don’t
have my license plate down in South Carolina. I go there for probably sometimes a month, a month and a half. Where you live, where that car is parked most of the time, should decide what the -- what your residence is. School systems, I -- We’ve heard from the mayor down to the chief down, we’ve -- schools are off limits, we would never enforce a statute like that or a rule like that as the kid is going to school or the kid is coming from school, we would never interfere with education, but my point to you is being that you have out of state offenders that are putting two, three kids in our school system at $18,000 dollars a clip and it’s become a burden on the cities.

SEN. CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Yeah, I was a policeman for 22 years dealing with the same problem year after year, but within the statute, I think we still have to put the exemptions in because if somebody does live in Florida for six months, one day, they’re allowed to come up here and drive our roads and we see a lot more people doing that because of the tax situation.

MICHAEL DIGIOVANCARLO: Yes, yes.

SEN. CHAMPAGNE (35TH): But as long as we remember that we have some exemptions that are going to go on that.

MICHAEL DIGIOVANCARLO: Absolutely. We have actually have battles with that with the municipal tax services in our state that actually go out and yes, they’re just up here visiting.

SEN. CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Right.

MICHAEL DIGIOVANCARLO: Obviously, you’d have some kind of an appeal process, too, but, you know, we’re
talking about the blatantly obvious ones that there’s no defense to it, you know.

SEN. CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Right, thank you.

MICHAEL DIGIOVANCARLO: Thank you.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Thank you, Senator. Any other questions? Thank you again for being here today.

MICHAEL DIGIOVANCARLO: Thank you.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Next up we have Kathy Flaherty.

KATHY FLAHERTY: Good afternoon, members of the Public Safety and Security Committee. My name is Kathy Flaherty. I’m the executive director of Connecticut Legal Rights Project and the co-chair of the Keep the Promise Coalition, but really here today, I’m here on behalf of the Connecticut Cross Disability Lifespan Alliance to draw your attention to the two bills on your very long agenda, so you have my written testimony. I’ll keep this very short. I’m testifying in support of H.B. 6957, 6957, AN ACT REQUIRING CERTAIN STATE BUILDINGS TO BE ACCESSIBLE TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES and in support of Bill 6951, AN ACT CONCERNING THE COMMUNICATION NEEDS OF PERSONS WHO ARE DEAF, HARD OF HEARING, OR DEAF/BLIND IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS.

Current law already requires state buildings to be accessible pursuant to the terms of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Fair Housing Amendment Act. The only suggested change that I have for what this proposal is that the second part of that subsection actually refers to a state office that no longer exists, so when you talk about the waivers
that are granted by the state building code
official, my recommendation would be give the waiver
authority to the building code official acting alone
and the thing that’s really important for people
with disabilities in emergencies is that they are
often left behind and they are overlooked and they
suffer really devastating impacts if they don’t have
the information in a timely fashion they need to
respond to an emergency situation.

The coordinator of the Cross Disability Lifespan
Alliance is Melissa Marshall. I believe she
submitted testimony. I’m not sure if she’s going to
make it here today, but she has worked on the
national level with Portlight Inclusive Disaster
Strategies, so I certainly encourage this committee
to reach out to her because she’s one of the experts
in this area.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Thank you for your testimony.
Questions? Senator Cassano.

SEN. CASSANO (4TH): Thank you. I do want to speak
on behalf of this bill. I’m in a different
situation than I was last year. I’m sitting in a
wheelchair here and hopefully this will all be over
with in a while. I can’t tell you how shocked I was
my first day in here between a wheelchair and a
walker as to how un-accessible this building is or
particularly the capitol itself. A simple example,
when you enter this building, you will see push
buttons in the bathrooms only. Thank goodness
people have been as courteous as they have because I
cannot get through any of these doors to any room on
any floor and it gets worse when you get next door
because that building is 100 years older. How we
could possibly establish rules and regulations for
the state of Connecticut that do not start at home is beyond me and so I have submitted a similar bill saying let’s fix up our own buildings because they are totally un-accessible and by doing that, we keep people from coming up there to testify. We don’t allow them to be a part of the process and so on. This is an experience. This is probably -- all I’ve gone through, this whole idea of accessibility is probably the thing that has hit me the most in this process and so I’m pleased to see this bill because it starts right here, it starts right here, so thank you for bringing it forward.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Thank you, Senator. Any other questions from committee members? Kathy, thank you for your testimony today.

KATHY FLAHERTY: Thanks for the opportunity.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Up next we have Representative Petit. Good afternoon.

REP. PETIT (22ND): Good afternoon, Co-Chairs Verrengia and Bradley, Vice-Chairman Paolillo, and Osten, Ranking Members Sredzinski and Hwang, distinguished members of Public Safety and Security. My name is William Petit. I’m the state representative for the 22nd District, which is Plainville and the west end of New Britain. I’m here to testify on Bill 5757. I was asked by the New Britain Municipal Administration to engage this conversation after an event where the local police were involved in a fatal shooting. The motivation here is not to review specific findings or specific details of the case, which was thoroughly investigated by the State’s Attorney’s Office, but rather to again raise the discussion of the process
and timing of the evaluation and reporting concerning the event.

Any incident that results in death is a tragedy and creates tensions for all, the law enforcement under tremendous stress, the deceased and family, and the community as a whole. The process in place seems fair and I don’t believe the municipality is questioning that at any level, and it’s done by an office as removed and unrelated to the local jurisdiction. The issue of concern they wish to raise relates to the length, timing, and reporting of the investigation. Obviously, the length can be impacted by many factors and time must be taken to ensure all possibilities are given due consideration. This type of discussion on fatal events has occurred previously in Connecticut and other jurisdictions across the USA in a variety of situations. Depending on the specifics of the case, local emotions may be quite inflamed.

As the process of review moves forward, the lack of feedback in the process sometimes causes emotions to smolder and worsen, creating increased stress, anxiety, and anguish for all involved. Others in our local delegation have submitted bills dealing with the issue from the angle of funding. These investigations need to be fair and thorough and neutral and I believe it is noted that the process in place generally serves us quite well. I believe in these tight budget times, resources may be stretched very thin, even as we hope that these types of investigations are being given a top priority. I ask the question and suggest for discussion that perhaps two items can be considered; the first to allow for periodic updates to be issued, in a very general sense, to notify all that
there is progress and how far along the progress is, how far along the process is.

By definition, to keep the process fair and neutral, these updates necessarily need to be nonspecific and not refer to specific facts, questions, or concerns of the case that are involved. For example, an update might merely note at this time, 25 percent of the process is completed. We hope to be able to get a report to the public and municipality in three months. An additional update might state that the process has moved faster or slower and our new endpoint is at such-and-such a time.

The second issue revolves around funding. A possibility would be perhaps the state’s attorney to have access to a pool of funds that could be used to expedite a review for personnel, lab testing, computer analysis, etc., when he felt that the resources were constraining or impeding the investigation and creating undue prolonged pressure on all those impacted, again, the public safety officer, the police, first and foremost, the families in the community. In closing, I thank all those who put their lives on the line every day to serve us and thank the State’s Attorney’s Office for their fair and considerate investigations and really hope that this subject matter hearing can spoke further conversation and ideas to help all those involved in these tragedies.

There are no easy answers, but perhaps more communication is the answer and could help decrease the associated tension. It would be helpful if the State’s Attorney’s Office in consultation with others could perhaps suggest solutions that would not require statutory implementation, though
obviously funding would require appropriations and legislative approval. So I thank you for your attention to this issue. Thank you for allowing me to speak.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Thank you, Representative Petit. Questions? Seeing none, thank you very much.

REP. PETIT (22ND): And I would just note that Mayor Stewart wasn’t able to be here and has submitted testimony on-line and the former Chief Wardwell as well as submitted testimony. I was actually handed the mayor’s testimony as I was sitting here, so I can’t tell you that I’ve read it yet, but I know what her thoughts are and I have not seen the chief’s testimony yet, but thank you.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Thank you. Next up Representative Pavlock.

REP. PAVALOCK-D'AMATO (77TH): Thank you. I’m Representative Pavlock-D’Amato and I have with me here Lieutenant Bridge and you called me about three hours earlier than I thought you would, so I apologize. I am here to testify in support of House Bill 6376 and this is AN ACT CONCERNING MOTOR VEHICLEinspectors as peace officers. You have my written testimony and I want to thank Chairman Verrengia, Chairman Bradley, and the esteemed members of the Public Safety Committee for bringing this bill to a public hearing. The purpose of this bill, as I laid out in my testimony is to have motor vehicle inspectors defined as peace officers under Connecticut statutes. This bill will solely provide DMV officers protection under legislation, however, it will not expand their arrest powers, as those are specifically set out in another statute.
I’m just going to say one more thing before I hand it over to Lieutenant Bridge. I just want to give an example that in the past when we do legislation, constantly we list peace officer and because DMV officers are not listed under the definition of peace officer, they’ve been left out, for example, when we did House Bill 1160, the gun violence prevention bill, for six months the DMV officers were actually felons within the state just doing their job, so that’s I think is just one prime example, but a peace officer does -- is listed in 63 statutes and so I think it’s important that we include them in this definition so they will no longer be felons just for doing their job and I will hand it over to Lieutenant Bridge.

DONALD BRIDGE: Good afternoon, Chairman Verrengia, Chairman Bradley, and honorable members of the Public Safety and Security Committee. I’m here to testify obviously in support of House Bill 6376, AN ACT CONCERNING MOTOR VEHICLE INSPECTORS AS PEACE OFFICERS. My name is Donald Bridge, Junior. I’m from Somers, Connecticut, currently a lieutenant with the department of motor vehicles. I’m a certified police officer following POST standards. Our primary mission for motor vehicle inspectors is a reduction of motor vehicle crashes and incidents on our highways in Connecticut. The mission is likely going to increase with the possibility of tolls and other additions to motor vehicle statutes. House Bill 6376 adds motor vehicle inspectors to the definition of peace officer as is found in Subdivision 9 of 53A3. Including motor vehicle inspectors in the definition of peace officer will not affect or change our authority, will provide us -- will not provide us with any additional powers of
arrest, will not give us any additional duties or change our retirement. The motor vehicle inspectors’ authorities are granted in accordance with 14-8 of the general statutes and we’re currently included in hazard duty retirement.

What the bill does do is provide with all the same rights and protections afforded to all other police officers, as well as those that are not police officers, such as state or judicial marshals. The bill eliminates the need to piecemeal adding motor vehicle inspectors into any new public acts or laws that use the term peace officer. A couple of examples as we have come along in a few ways; in 2011, until that time in 2935, carrying or a pistol or revolver without a permit was prohibited except for peace officers. That was corrected in 2311, they piecemealed motor vehicle inspector into that. In 2008, the use of force statutes, we were not included until the public acts were enacted for 53A19, 53A22, 53A23, which is all use of force statutes.

Until that time, when we got piecemealed into and put into that, we were not covered. Failure to assist police officer, 53A167B was another item that was added in 2008 and in 2016, 53A217B was finally amended for the possession of weapons on school grounds which one of our main focus is and statutory authorities is the protection of the school buses and the school bus drivers to ensure that they’re properly licensed and conducting things in the manner to protect our children.

Some of the examples currently that we have that don’t include us and use the term peace officer, in 14164AA, data recorders. Peace officers can only
alter and take downloads from that. We don’t have the authority to go in and do a download on a recorder in a car. The 291K emergency alert system to assist apprehensions of persons suspected of killing or seriously injuring peace officers, we’re not included in that statute either, and then 53A111, arson in the first degree, if we happen to be on the scene at a fire helping out because our officer saw somebody in need in there and something happens, arises, we would not be covered in that either, that’s peace officer, and then lastly, the use of information in 2916 from the criminal system is not allowed to anybody outside of peace officers. I thank you for your time and ask for your support for this bill, 6376, and I welcome any questions that you may have.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Thank you, Lieutenant. Thank you, Representative. Representative Vail.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, Representative -- lieutenant from my district, Somers. Just a few questions, so if you could give -- how many -- how many inspectors are there throughout the state of Connecticut?

DONALD BRIDGE: There’s currently 49 sworn inspectors in the state and there are two more attending the POST academy presently, one in each of the classes. Once they graduate, we’ll be up to 51.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Okay, and so you go through the same POST training as all other police in the state. Is that correct?

DONALD BRIDGE: All other police officers in the state, yes, correct.
REP. VAIL (52ND): Do you think that maybe that you guys were left out of the peace officer thing inadvertently? That it’s just an oversight because maybe there wasn’t as many or someone -- just an oversight or do you think you were specifically left out for some reason?

DONALD BRIDGE: I believe it to be an oversight. I lot of people don’t realize that we actually exist and we’re here and what we do for the citizens of the state.

REP. VAIL (52ND): And primarily you would spend most of your time on the interstate highways or if you could elaborate on that so people get a general idea of what you do.

DONALD BRIDGE: Well, most of our time is spent on the highways for those inspectors that are assigned to the truck units, we work at the weigh stations. We work along the highways. We have a group of ten of us that are assigned to the school transportation section that the majority of their work is checking and looking at all the school buses that transport all the children to and from the schools, going to the school grounds to ensure that the school bus drivers are, in fact, licensed properly and not suspended and properly equipped to do their jobs and then a small group also monitors the dealers on para-sections, but all of us are certified to do what we call truck enforcement on the highways or any motor vehicle enforcement, for that matter.

REP. VAIL (52ND): And so you have -- you have the authority to pull people over?

DONALD BRIDGE: Yes.
REP. VAIL (52ND): Do you have the authority to give tickets?

DONALD BRIDGE: Yes.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Do you have the authority to arrest, I know you mentioned that earlier, and if so, under what circumstances?

DONALD BRIDGE: The arrest is based on 148, which is related to motor vehicles and it’s the same powers as a local officer or a state police officer would have in their jurisdiction relating to motor vehicles.

REP. VAIL (52ND): And again, so pulling over someone just like a state trooper or local police, you would still have the same risk?

DONALD BRIDGE: Yes, sir, the same risk and just that the -- in fact, at the end of January, one of our officers who was finishing up a traffic stop on the Putnam Bridge was rear-ended by another motor vehicle traveling that had left the roadway. He was parked up partially in the grass, rear-ended and crashed and he’s still out today from his injuries from that crash.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Okay, and again, I can’t imagine -- there -- I can’t imagine there’s any fiscal note associated with this. I’ll ask maybe the representative about that.

REP. PAVALOCK-D'AMATO (77TH): No, there isn’t.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Okay. Again, I can’t imagine any reason why you wouldn’t be considered a peace officer. I think maybe it was an oversight and you just -- people didn’t think to add you to the thing. I can’t imagine why anyone would be opposed to this
and I look forward to hearing any more opinions about it, but you certainly have my support moving forward and thank you for coming up and giving your testimony.

DONALD BRIDGE: Thank you and you’re welcome.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Thank you, Representative Vail. Senator Champagne.

SEN. CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Thank you. Lieutenant Bridge, we’ve worked together in the past and question, if you stop a vehicle and there’s criminal activity within the vehicle, do you make the arrest?

DONALD BRIDGE: So if there’s something criminal activity that comes from the traffic stop, typically that would be called to the local police station or if it’s in the jurisdiction of the state police, we would call the state trooper to come take that. An example of that would be somebody with drugs or contraband in the car that’s outside of the motor vehicles, we would pass that over to the agency that’s within their jurisdiction.

SEN. CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Okay, and the same as when I stopped the truck and had problems with it, you guys came in and assisted me?

DONALD BRIDGE: Correct.

SEN. CHAMPAGNE (35TH): I support this. I think you should be identified as police officers in everything you do and you have stopped, I don’t know if you remember this, it’s been a long time, but you personally have stopped going to and from work to assist me in Vernon on more than one occasion, so thank you for backing me up.

DONALD BRIDGE: You’re welcome, sir.
REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Thank you, Senator. Any other questions from colleagues? Thank you, Lieutenant. Thank you, Representative, for your time.

REP. PAVALOCK-D'AMATO (77TH): Thank you.

DONALD BRIDGE: Thank you.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Up next we have Roger Nelson.

ROGER NELSON: Good afternoon, Co-Chairs Bradley, Verrengia, Vice-Chair Osten, Vice-Chair Perillo, Ranking Members Hwang and Sredzinski, and distinguished members of the Public Safety Committee. My name is Roger Nelson. I’m the fire marshal for the Bloomfield Center Fire District and I currently sit on the board of directors for the Connecticut Fire Marshals Association. Connecticut Fire Marshals Association opposed Senate Bill 664, AN ACT CONCERNING AND SALE AND USE OF CONSUMER GRADE FIREWORKS. This bill greatly change the type of fireworks allowed in Connecticut and legalize all consumer fireworks, including firecrackers, aerial devices, and even ground launch devices.

The Joint Council of Fire Service Organizations consisting of the Connecticut Fire Marshals Association, the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control, Connecticut Career Chiefs, Connecticut State Firefighters, Connecticut Department Constructors Association, Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association, and the Uniformed Professional Firefighters Association have all back the organization in opposition of this bill in its entirety. Also, a brochure will be provided for you later. We also have the support of the Connecticut Police Chiefs, Connecticut Emergency Management
Association, Connecticut Chapter of the Arson Investigators, and Gas, Fire, and Explosion Investigation Unit.

CFMA opposes this bill based on a number of issues, including potential risk of injuries to children, increase in fires, increase in responsibilities for local fire marshals, and lack of continuity with the surrounding states. At this point, Massachusetts allows no fireworks, Rhode Island allows sparklers only as we do, and so does the state of New York. The bill also does not provide for the state fire marshal to create regulations or to control access and permitting. Last year, an estimated 13,000 injuries were treated in U.S. hospital emergency departments as a result of consumer grade fireworks. An average around the Fourth of July holiday, 250 people go to the emergency room every day. We’re only going to be selling to adult individuals over 21 years of age, however, accounting for injuries, children less than 15 years of age account for 36 percent of the estimated injuries in 2017, 50 percent for the estimated injuries for individuals younger than 20 years of age. Children 10 to 14 years of age were the highest among those.

Since 2015 in Connecticut, there have been 85 structure fires attributed to the use of consumer grade fireworks, two of which resulted in the death of an 18-month-old and a 19-year-old, both of whom were sleeping in their beds. Accidents can occur at any time without warning. Fireworks have a mind of their own. Once it’s lit, you can’t pull it back. Innocent bystanders will now become at risk, intentionally or not. Aerial devices have no control once they are lit. The proposed law would allow this use by the untrained public in densely
populated area with no control or oversight of safe
distances. Right now, consumer grade fireworks by
FDA standards should be at a 200-foot radius around
who is shooting off the firework and that would
probably be about four times the length of this
room. I can’t see how that could be achieved in any
of the cities -- largest cities in the state of
Connecticut, especially Hartford, Bridgeport,
Stamford, etc.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Roger, if I can just ask you
to just please summarize. We’ll open it up to
questions. Thank you.

ROGER NELSON: Iowa recently did the same thing. I
have given you their stuff there, along with their
injuries increased by 210 percent for the first
year, and to say this is a safety concern for both
first responders as well as the citizens of
Connecticut. Thank you.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Thank you. Any questions
from the committee? Thank you for your time today,
thank you for your testimony. Next up we have
Representative Lanoue.

REP. LANOUE (45TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My
name is Brian Lanoue. I’m a state representative
from the 45th District representing five towns in
eastern Connecticut and I sit before you today in
support of House Bill 6158, which I’m proud to
sponsor and that’s AN ACT EXPANDING AND EXTENDING
THE CRISIS INITIATIVE PILOT PROGRAM. A CRISIS is an
acronym that stands for Connection to Recovery
Through Intervention, Support, and Initiating
Services. I submitted my written testimony for you
all to consider. I want to just say in brief, we
have a public health crisis in our state and our
nation with the opioid issue. I would say there are four big categories that can combat this, that’s law enforcement, mental health, family support, and the community as a whole and CRISIS, the acronym CRISIS and this pilot program in Troop E covers that and addresses that.

It gives the troopers more -- greater training in CIT training, crisis intervention certification, to help the de-escalate a situation when it comes to substance abuse and opioid type calls. There’s a mental health professional assigned to the officer when they respond. In many cases if they can’t respond, they do the referrals. It’s been very, very successful from everybody I hear from in Troop E and we’d like to expand that into Troop D. I have with me to speak further on this, I would say the guardian angel of Griswold and throughout our district, somebody who’s been very, very active in combat in the opioid crisis, that’s Miranda Mahoney from Griswold PRIDE, who is the program coordinator.

MIRANDA MAHONEY: Hello and thank you for the invitation to speak on this very important issue. I’m a prevention specialist for Community Health Resources and work with the Griswold and Putman PRIDE drug-free prevention coalition and have 18 years of experience in the substance use field. I was part of the community outreach component of the CRISIS program in the pilot com of Griswold and worked closely with the state police and a statewide narcotics taskforce on developing this program to fit the needs in the communities of eastern Connecticut. I have a vested interest in this program, not only because of my profession, but also because I’m a resident of northeastern Connecticut and see first-hand the need for such a program. No
one is immune to the impact of substance use disorders. In today’s day and age, we all know someone, love someone, are someone, or lost someone to substance use disorders and that is why we’re here today, proposing to expand a program that brings a multi-pronged, comprehensive approach to combat the opioid epidemic that has hit eastern Connecticut hard.

Together, law enforcement, treatment and prevention professionals, and communities entered into a partnership and created a new approach to an old problem. We came out of our silos and worked together to offer a path to recovery from an unlikely source, the police. The police are the ones on the front lines, who see the consequences of the addiction, who make the arrest to only see the same person again and again and again. The CRISIS initiative aims to reduce recidivism rates by taking a proactive approach by giving police a new tool for their tool belt, a referral to a crisis intervention trained, licensed clinical social worker who is embedded in the state police barracks. This clinician responds to crisis calls, processes referrals from troopers for people with mental health or substance use disorders, conducts assessments on the level of care needed, and conducts follow-up visits after an overdose or other event.

From its inception in June of 2017 through January 2019, 392 individuals were referred to the clinician and 399 follow-up clinician contacts were conducted after an overdose of other event. Communities that have implemented a police-assisted addiction and recovery initiative, also known as PAARI, have observed more than just an increase in access to
treatment services. PAARI communities have seen as much as a 38 percent reduction in crimes associated with addiction, have seen a cost savings by diverting people into treatment rather than triggering the criminal justice system and that has increased trust from their community. The CRISIS program and all PAARI programs recognize and treat addiction as the disease it is. It’s realizing that you cannot arrest your way out of the problem and the old way of doing things is not working.

By having law enforcement provide paths to recovery and treatment services, you’re changing and reducing the stigma associated with the disease. When you reduce the stigma, people are more likely to seek treatment. It’s creating that trust with the person because people must you know you care before they care what you know. Just imagine that person you arrested last month is now the person extending their hand connecting you to treatment services. That sends a powerful message and hopefully increases the likelihood of actually treatment and entering into recovery. Please take the time to consider the impact that substance abuse disorders have had on eastern Connecticut, the need for an increase in services, and the cultural changes this program brings to the way law enforcement officers treat the opioid epidemic. Thank you.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Thank you. Representative Vail.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, Happy Valentine’s Day. So the CRISIS program, was that created through legislation, the pilot program?
MIRANDA MAHONEY: No, it was created under a COPS grant with the Department of Justice.

REP. VAIL (52ND): So do we need legislation to continue the program?

REP. LANOUE (45TH): I think we -- I think legislation would be great to show how important this program is. I think we -- legislation would help, I think make it permanent, and help it to grow within the state police and also local police. Local police departments can also latch onto this and utilize the mental health professional. That was part of the idea behind it, so I think we need to -- I think legislation would help, certainly protect the program.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Would that then -- So the grant -- the grant would become more of a part of a line item that would be a cost associated with this now because of the grant is expiring? This would just become -- It would have to be a line item in the budget?

REP. LANOUE (45TH): That would be a possibility. You know, there is -- part of the need is also to have a program coordinator that is a bridge between the state police, the police department, law enforcement and mental health community and also the outreach to the community as a whole. I think that’s part of the idea I think behind this.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Okay, so Troop E wants to continue and Troop D wants to participate in this as well moving forward? Has there been any talk about doing all the troops across that state?

REP. LANOUE (45TH): I think -- I think that’s a desire. I heard that from different personnel
within the department. I think that would be certainly a question for them, but I have heard that. Certainly I can also speak to the local departments, a number of local police officers, and the local PDs, like they at CRISIS, they would like to have that for the municipal police departments, again, from different law enforcement officers who I’ve spoken to on a local level, as well.

REP. VAIL (52ND): You had mentioned 38 percent decrease in crime, was that in the overall bigger program or was that specifically for the Troop E CRISIS?

MIRANDA MAHONEY: No, that’s the overall program, the PAARI Program, which is a national program.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Okay. Are there any statistics on how this program worked in Troop E?

MIRANDA MAHONEY: We only have the statistics that I mentioned, the referrals, 392 and 399 follow-ups.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Okay, and it says here they want to extend the sunset date to the program to January 1, 2022. What’s the current sunset date? Do you know?

REP. LANOUE (45TH): I believe it’s 2020.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Okay, so the end of the year. Okay, I think it’s a proactive approach. I know they used that up in Gloucester, Massachusetts. So I think that’s kind of where it started, I think. I think the city of Groton has the Angel Program, I think is somewhat similar to this. I think it’s a proactive approach. I think it’s a good one, so I’m interested to hear more about it. Thank you.
REP. LANOUE (45TH): Oh, thank you, Representative, and I just want to add as well, this particular program, the mental health professional is not in the actual squad car with the officer. They go on their own, so once the call is done, they can do the follow-up, they can do the referrals, and it frees up the officer to continue with the law enforcement duties.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Okay, thank you.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Thank you, Representative Vail. Any other questions from the committee? Thank you for your testimony today.

REP. LANOUE (45TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Next up David McGuire.

DAVID MCGUIRE: Good afternoon, Chairperson Verrengia and distinguished members of the committee. My name is David McGuire. I’m the executive director of the ACLU of Connecticut. I have submitted five pieces of testimony today. I’d like to briefly touch on three of those and I’m happy to take questions on any of them. the three pieces of testimony that I’m supporting today go to community police relations. We believe that these bills if passed into law would help lead to the formation of a foundation to reestablish trust between communities and police across the state, which would lead to the state being safer and making law enforcement’s job easier.

The first bill is House Bill 5922, AN ACT CONCERNING USE OF FORCE REPORTS. As I’m sure the members of the committee know, the legislature five or six years ago passed a law requiring police document every use of force with a use of force report. They
don’t, unfortunately, have to submit those anywhere, unlike a bill they passed right around the same time around Taser safety training and reporting, so we now have three years of really comprehensive Taser data that police departments submit annually. Unfortunately that data is not that useful in its -- by itself as we don’t have the full use of force spectrum to see whether that force is being used appropriately or whether other uses of force are being overused. So we would ask the legislature -- the committee and the legislature to pass 5922. Again, we don’t think this will be an overly onerous thing to do. They are already tracking these uses of force and that data will allow administrators, advocates, and the legislature to make informed decisions about how to move forward.

The next bill is House Bill 5757, that’s the expedited investigations into officer-involved shootings resulting in death. That’s the bill that Representative Petit supported and it is really heartening to see support on both sides of the aisle for that bill. The incident in New Britain that Representative Petit referenced was a one-year investigation. We are aware in the recent past couple of years of at least two investigations into an officer shooting that took four years to complete and what happens when there’s such a prolonged investigation, the family members are put in untenable position. Often times elected officials are in a very difficult spot because they’re not able to answer questions about these things, it’s out of their hands, and the longer the process takes, the less confidence the public has in the process, so we are very much in support of a reform of that system, finding ways to expedite those
investigations and I think Dr. Petit’s suggestion of interim reports makes sense, but we do need to overhaul that system.

And lastly, Senate Bill 402, which is the creation of an office to investigate complaints of police misconduct, is something that is I think also sorely needed. We now have a patch guilt of different oversight mechanisms across the state, some of which work better than others. It’s also a tremendous resource for the departments to deal with these complaints, so we feel like having an independent office to deal with these could be a very smart solution. Just briefly, I would say that the UK and Canada have systems like this where they’re independent offices. This has restored a lot of confidence in the police and ultimately resulted in fewer complaints being filed. We at the ACLU have done two reports over the last five or so years on the police complaint process and found many barriers to people filing complaints, so we welcome a discussion about Senate Bill 402. Happy to take any questions you might have.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Thank you. Representative Vail.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, David.

DAVID MCGUIRE: Good afternoon.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Regarding Senate Bill 402, would that -- it creates an office. How many employees would that office have and who would they report to?

DAVID MCGUIRE: So a couple years back, someone who worked at I think the Ontario office up in Canada came and testified before this committee. Ontario
has a similar population as the state of Connecticut, that province, and I believe they had somewhere around a dozen people working there, but I believe this can be scaled to deal with what is appropriate, so if this office was to look at all complaints filed, they would need a very large staff. If they were just to look at complaints of say, you know, physical force or something more serious on that spectrum, I assume that they could have a smaller office, but there would certainly be a fiscal note associated with this, but I think it would result in some municipality savings, as well, which could offset it.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Who -- Under what agency would they work for?

DAVID MCGUIRE: That’s a great question. We just saw this bill pop up and our support of having that conversation, I’m not sure where it would be. In some places in the Office of the Attorney General, you know, and other places, it’s with the Chief State’s Attorney’s Office. We do think it would be helpful to be truly independent. It clearly would make sense to house them in an existing agency for administrative purposes only, but that’s a discussion that we’re willing to engage in.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Okay, thank you.

DAVID MCGUIRE: Thank you for the question.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Thank you, Representative. Any other questions? Thank you very much.

DAVID MCGUIRE: Thank you.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Up next Representative Cheeseman.
REP. CHEESEMAN (37TH): Good afternoon, Chairman Verrengia, Vice-Chair Paolillo, and distinguished members of the Public Safety Committee. I am Representative Holly Cheeseman from the 37th District of East Lyme and Salem and I’m pleased to have the opportunity to testify before you today in support of Proposed House Bill 6575, AN ACT CONCERNING ACTIVE SHOOTER RESPONSE PLANS and 6958, AN ACT CONCERNING REGIONAL EXERCISES ON EMERGENCY RESPONSE. These two bills were some that were a product of a bipartisan school safety working group that convened over the course of this past summer. During the course of our meetings, we had presentations from Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, local police chiefs, superintendents of schools, chief executive officers, and as I said, a number of bills were the result of these deliberations.

With regard to 6575, it would require the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection to work together with Police Officer Standards Training Council to assist municipalities in the development of their response plans to active shooter situations. It became apparent that there was a differing level of preparedness for the municipalities and it was felt that having a consistent source of information would be useful. This would also help to give municipalities access to best practices and then when it comes to these emergencies, require municipalities to have an ordered level of response, so if something happens, depending on the severity, you know that your adjoining town would be ready to assist you on a variety of topics and again, this would provide additional assistance to our municipalities, give
them access to best practices, and ensure there’s some sort of review of those plans as they were formulated.

With regard to the second bill, 6958, there is nothing that is a substitute for rehearsal when it comes to these response plans and you’ll see from my testimony in my district, Dominion Energy conducts emergency drills five or six times a year in conjunction with local, state, and federal authorities. So if we are going to have these plans developed, it seems imperative that at least every other year, you practice what’s going to happen. No, we’re not just talking about major incidents with regard to active shooters, I’m talking natural disasters, storms. Again, there is no substitute for practice when it comes to being able to respond in an emergency when feelings are running high. So I thank you very much for your time today. I appreciate you giving these bills your consideration and I would welcome any questions.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Thank you, Representative. Senator Champagne.

SEN. CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Is it the intention, I’m sorry, Representative, is it the intention to have the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection actually develop this plan and -- or just making sure that the municipality has the proper plan?

REP. CHEESEMAN (37TH): I think they need to make sure the municipality has a plan, but I would also hope the DESPP would be the repository of best practices, so if a town came to them and said look, can you look at our plan, assess it, and then DESPP
would be a position to say yes, we’ve looked at it. We think this is a better way to go about this.

SEN. CHAMPAGNE (35TH): And are we going to require municipalities to do that because I’m sure -- I would tend to guess that one of the towns in my district has probably a more advanced plan than what they have.

REP. CHEESEMAN (37TH): This would -- DESPP would have to review it.

SEN. CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Okay.

REP. CHEESEMAN (37TH): I think the feeling is a municipality wants help to develop a plan that DESPP and POST would be a repository of those best practices.

SEN. CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Okay.

REP. CHEESEMAN (37TH): In turn, there would have to be a review of municipalities’ plans to ensure that they have a plan in place and that it meets certain standards.

SEN. CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Okay. I just want to make sure that they’re not going to lower our standards that we have.

REP. CHEESEMAN (37TH): And I would hope -- And I think that’s something we have to bear in mind when you’re drafting if this becomes a bill. The proof in the pudding is in the eating and having served on the board of selectmen in my town for three terms, I know if towns -- you have a way of doing things, you think your way is the best way, and it may very well be the best way. I think one of the things that came out of our meetings this summer was there are differing approaches and really my hope would be
that our state organizations could be that repository for best practices. We have very different towns, so you know, major city’s plan is going to differ a great deal from a small town, you know, a town like Vernon or a small town like Salem in my district, so as I say, I hope the state as a whole and the state organizations and agencies could be that repository of best practices, not to be prescriptive as much as availing -- allowing towns, police chiefs, schools, to availing themselves of those best practices.

SEN. CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Okay. Thank you.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Thank you, Senator. Any other questions? Thank you very much, Representative.

REP. CHEESEMAN (37TH): Thank you so much for your time today. Next up John Cavanna.

JOHN CAVANNA: Distinguished members of the Public Safety and Security Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in regards to Proposed Senate Bill No. 558, AN ACT CONCERNING RAILROAD EXPRESS COMPANY POLICE OFFICERS. I am in support of this bill as proposed. My name is John Cavanna and I have over 14 years of law enforcement experience. I currently work as a sergeant for the city of Hartford. I’m also certified to the Northeast Operating Rules Advisory Committee, NORAC, in rail safety. I hold the position of range master for the city of Hartford and in task with the training of firearm skills for the entire department. I also hold a taskforce position with the DEA as a clandestine lab technician. One of the things we do is dismantle fentanyl facilities.
I would like to discuss the numerous benefits that many of our towns will have after the Connecticut General Assembly authorizes a railroad express company the authority to establish a railroad police department that will employ POST certified officers. Railroad police officers will be required to have their POST certification like any officer in the state of Connecticut, National Transportation Safety Board, railroad and transit investigation training, and hazardous materials training. Railroad police officers’ duties and responsibilities will be to conduct patrols and secure railroad facilities, stations, warehouses, fuel depots, and rail lines. Railroad police officers will provide public safety, law enforcement, and emergency management of the railroad express company’s rail lines and upon the request from the local police department where the railroad travels through, provide any assistance needed in regards to the railroad.

We can do that through the use of vehicles equipped with devices known as high rail to allow us to access areas that your normal police departments cannot. Railroad police officers with POST certified instructors and provide rail safety training to POST, to Connecticut police officers, and other emergency first responders also. Tragically in December, two Chicago police officers were killed while operating around train tracks. They were in the act of searching for a suspect that had made onto a rail line. I can tell you that throughout my career in the city of Hartford, numerous times we chase suspects down onto rail lines and officers that aren’t trained to be near train tracks present a danger to themselves simply
from the ignorance of knowing how to operate near them.

We will provide a rapid response, police resources, and equipment to the isolated and secluded rail line areas that local police, fire, and medical first responders cannot access simply due to the geography of the land. Railroad police will maintain the federal, state, and municipality police partnership during day-to-day police and investigation functions. The local police departments will still maintain their jurisdiction law enforcement authority for major crimes and other emergencies and have the full cooperation assistance of any railroad police department.

The economic benefits to the state, there’s no cost to the state or towns. Railroad police will be part of a private railroad express company and the police officers will be employed and compensated by the companies at no cost to the state or local municipal governments. Railroad police will seek out and apply for federal transportation, homeland security, and COPS grants, another federal funding that become available. Railroad police will allow for local police to free up from calls for service, complaints and investigations that come in on the railroads in their towns. I’d like to thank you for your cooperation and consideration to this important public safety issue. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions.

PETER ALIX: Good morning, members of the Public Safety Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in regards to this bill, No. 558. I’m in support of this bill as well. Good morning, my name is Pete Alex. I’ve been a law enforcement
officer for 28 years, as well as commissioned officer in the military for 21 years. I recently retired from the South Windsor Police Department where I served as a training sergeant as well as a patrol supervisor. Twenty of my 28 years was spent in the patrol division. I was privileged to be the department’s first canine handler, as well as serving for ten years as a member of regional SWAT team. I was the primary instructor for the town of South Windsor with regards to use of force and other disciplines. Prior to becoming a police officer, I was a commissioned officer in the United States Army from 1977 to 1989, serving in a variety of command and staff positions, both in the Continental United States and the United States Army Europe. I’m a graduate of the Army Infantry School, as well as U.S. Army Command and General Staff College.

As John stated earlier, there’s a variety of benefits that can be derived from this program. In my 20 years as a patrolman or a patrol supervisor, I’ve had probably no fewer than six or seven calls for service regarding the rail lines that ran through the town of South Windsor and I can tell you right off the bat, the first time you step on a rail line as a police officer kind of scares the wits out of you because you don’t know what’s coming. So these are things that I think agencies around the state, around the capitol region, can really benefit from, having people that are trained law enforcement officers, as well being properly schooled and educated in the danger surrounding those things. A primary function on this, I think, or the benefit is that there’s absolutely no cost to the state of Connecticut involved in this program. Subject to your questions, that’s pretty much all I’ve got to
add other than reiterating what John has already said.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Thank you for your testimony. Questions? Senator Champagne.

SEN. CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Thank you, just a couple questions, a train crash or any type of accident involving the train, would that be investigated by the railroad police?

JOHN CAVANNA: Absolutely, sir. Any agency that had had a train strike either a vehicle or a pedestrian would be totally able to contact Connecticut railroad police and they would be able to come out and help them if they wanted to maintain the investigation as their own or take over the investigation for them.

SEN. CHAMPAGNE (35TH): But who would have the primary jurisdiction on the tracks?

JOHN CAVANNA: The municipality governments that those tracks run through will have primary jurisdiction, but the railroad officer would also have jurisdiction on those tracks.

SEN. CHAMPAGNE (35TH): And riding the trains along the shoreline, would they have reciprocal agreements with New York?

JOHN CAVANNA: So you’re speaking of commuter trains.

SEN. CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Right.

JOHN CAVANNA: We’re speaking mostly of freight.

SEN. CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Freight trains?
JOHN CAVANNA: Correct. There is 330 miles of non-FRA enforced Amtrak, police track if you will, in the state of Connecticut that moves millions of tons of hazardous cargo every year that’s, in essence, just unwatched because police as a whole have the inability to access a lot of the areas that the trains are operating in.

SEN. CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Okay. And the -- Basically, it’s a self-contained unit, this railroad police department, and who do they -- would there be somebody they would answer to?

JOHN CAVANNA: Of course. A railroad police unit would answer to POST like any municipality agency in the state of Connecticut.

SEN. CHAMPAGNE (35TH): All right. So basically the primary job function would be protecting the trains carrying cargo?

JOHN CAVANNA: Yes, sir, and the inspection of track. Officers would be required to be NORAC certified, which is the Northeast Operating Committee, and they would be able to identify a hazardous issue of track maintenance and possibly prevent a derailment before it occurred simply by being able to contact the appropriate resources to fix that track.

SEN. CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Especially the benefit to the state is safety.

JOHN CAVANNA: Yes.

SEN. CHAMPAGNE (35TH): That’s the biggest thing and it’s not just safety from somebody stealing something, it’s the safety of the trains themselves?
JOHN CAVANNA: Correct, it’s the safety of the trains traveling down the corridors.

SEN. CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Okay. And I think you’ve already answered my other question is that there’s no cost to the state or the towns. Thank you.

JOHN CAVANNA: You’re welcome, sir.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Thank you. Next up, the Chairman, Representative Verrengia.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Thank you and thank you for being here again this session. Just a follow-up to one of the last questions, you said that -- the question was asked like who do you report to and your answer is you report to POST. Most police departments report to like a chief of police, a town, how would that work with the railroad? So and a follow-up would be I’m not familiar with the railroad, quite frankly, but it’s my understanding is that there are multiple private owners, so how many multiple private owners are we looking at that can potentially create a police department and then who would they answer to other than POST? Like do you have like a chain, like a chief of police?

JOHN CAVANNA: Of course. There would be a chain of command and they would answer to what would most likely being the Connecticut Rail Association, which is attended by all your railroads in the state of Connecticut. Currently, there is roughly 17 railroads that are non-Amtrak railroads in the state.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): And what kind of -- I’m not familiar with them, but what kind of authority do they have?
JOHN CAVANNA: Any railroad granted a charter, in essence the charter is in essence identifying that railroad as its own municipality government and that goes back to the late 1880’s.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): So if there was an issue of say, I’m just making this up hypothetically, police misconduct, if you will. Who polices the police there, I guess, is the question. How do you see that model working?

PETER ALIX: Basically, the way you would see this follow out, as these guys would be subject to the same rules and procedures as any law enforcement agency, okay. Again, as John stated, the railroads have a charter they belong to, an association. It would be a separate entity, just like the MVC has their own police department, okay, and who does the MVC department report to, all right, the MVC. The MVC has, you know, the state of Connecticut has somewhat oversight over the MVC and it would be the same in this particular instance, okay, you’re policing the rails, you’re protecting the tracks, you’re protecting the cargo, taking care and watching out for vandalism to the various yards and stations that are involved in these things.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): And it would be up to, and correct me if I’m wrong, it would be up to the individual owners of the railroad whether or not they want to form a police department or have police there, so if there’s a situation where one privately owned railroad would have police and the next railroad next door chooses not to have police, is it -- I’m really trying to understand because I’m not familiar, like I said, too much with the railroad,
so that could happen, right, I mean, you could have that situation?

PETER ALIX: Theoretically, you could probably have that happen, but I think what would probably develop is once this gets started, it would just be a matter of okay, how did this develop and how can you expand this to include another section or another entity.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): And I’m all about jobs and obviously, this would create jobs. Do you have any idea roughly, you know, how many jobs this would create?

JOHN CAVANNA: full-time officers, probably around 10 to 12 and obviously different times of the year, part time during the warm summer months. One of the biggest things that railroads suffer from in the state of Connecticut is ATVs and dirt bikes because they cost hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage simply by riding down the tracks. Then they erode the ballast stone, it lets the ties settle. When the ties settle, the rail leans and then you have to come in with a track crew and replace that entire section of rail. It’s very difficult for the railroads, I’ll speak on behalf of Central New England Railroad, the president is AJ Belliveau, you call the police to have them respond to an areas and it’s impossible for law enforcement to get there because they’re not equipped to travel to the locations that the tracks run through. Railroad police officers would have vehicles equipped with what’s known as high rail, where you drive onto the tracks, the gear goes down, and you can drive along the track and see exactly what a train crew is seeing, so it would be something that just that, the savings in track maintenance from just having a
presence in an area that might help deter people from operating ATVs and dirt bikes on rail beds would be a huge savings to the railroads.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Thank you. Obviously, the railroad has been around for many, many years and it was interesting when you came last year because it was the first that I’ve heard about the interest of railroad police. Is there any one incident or incidents that has provoked you guys to want to create a police department or departments or is it a situation where you’re really being proactive and want to get ahead of a curve, if you will?

PETER ALIX: As far as one specific incident that would be noteworthy or stand out, I can’t think of one, but just my own personal experience years ago, I got sent to a call for service in South Windsor, so this guy got caught on the railroad tracks with his car. I get there and I turn around and it turned out to be a very well-inebriated man, decided he was going to take his wife’s car, drive down the tracks to look for his wallet that he had lost the day before when he was driving his dirt bike down the tracks. And of course, obviously, the car gets hung up and stuck on the tracks, requiring the use of a tow truck. Get out there and in his best drunken tone, he tries to explain to me how this was going to be easier driving down the tracks because he says when was the last time you ever saw a train on this track. Well, don’t you know, divine providence, I look up and I say well, about right now because here came a train. The guy was doing about 20 miles an hour. He stops, he gets out, and there’s where I got my first education as to what kind of damage can actually be done to a railroad because this guy starts to explain to me now the
fact that this drunk upset the ballast -- the ballast on the track. He had just spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to replace this section of track and then of course, to get this thing off the track, now we have to get a wrecker and there’s only way for the wrecker to get down there, so he doubles the damage. So again, these things, I mean, that’s one big incident I had in South Windsor, okay. How many times across the state of these things being repeated and had I not gotten that education from the operator of the train, I probably would have just let the guy go with a citation for, you know, operating under suspension and, you know, operating without a license and so on, okay, and in that particular instance, we turn around, we threw a charge of criminal mischief on there and attached a dollar amount to the police report. Now, what happened after that, I can’t tell you.

JOHN CAVANNA: Representative, if you would allow, I’ll add to that. The main incident that caused me to decide to compose this legislation last year, two years ago, excuse me, the end of 2017, I’m friends with engineers for the Central New England Railroad, which is one of the primary freight carriers for wood for Home Depot that comes into the interchange in Hartford right here behind our police headquarters located at 253 High Street. He called me on the cell phone to tell me that two individuals had boarded the train while in transit, coming down past the University of Hartford, and they were watching out the windows of the cab. They were coming from car to car to car to car closer and closer to the engine. So I was in the city, I was on duty, I got on the radio and requested additional units respond to that area of the city to try to get
there to get these gentlemen who had boarded the train. Simply by design, the way the rail line is protected, there was very few places that any of our cops could even access that rail line to attempt to apprehend those people who had boarded the train. Never found out what their intentions were. We were unable to get to them and that’s something that occurs quite often.

That or people like to throw objects, the most recent one being a bowling ball off the top of the Woodland Street overpass at a locomotive when its traveling down the corridor. I think the mere presence of having somebody that goes out and patrols those tracks would keep people out of the area a lot more effectively than the presence we have now, which I’m okay with because current officers in the state of Connecticut have no safety awareness training to be on the tracks. Our cops in the city of Hartford, they don’t know that we have automated switches, that at 2 o'clock in the morning, you could be walking on a section of track looking for a suspect and the switch will move.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): I understand. And then just one last follow-up question, the question had to do with the jurisdiction. Correct me if I’m wrong, I thought you had said it would be mutual between municipal this railroad police. How does it work now with the Amtrak police? I’m of the understanding, if there’s an accident on an Amtrak rail, the Amtrak owns it. So this model would be a little bit different than existing laws we have now? And the reason I’m asking, quite frankly, is, you know, leaving it up to two different jurisdictions to decide who wants to take a particular incident at a particular day at a particular time, sometimes
it’s actually problematic out in the field, as you may have encountered over your years of experience.

JOHN CAVANNA: Of course.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): So what -- So I guess, if you can comment on that. Why the mutual and not exclusive?

JOHN CAVANNA: Of course. So when it comes to Amtrak, we’re talking about a federal corridor. Amtrak does not patrol the state lines that run through the state, so we have 339 miles of unpatrolled track. Amtrak police will not go patrol some of the privately owned freight lines because that’s not their track rights. Their track rights run from New Haven through to Springfield. We were not be patrolling that.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): I understand.

JOHN CAVANNA: That’s a federal line.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): So is there -- is there any reason the tracks that you do control, is there any reason why you wouldn’t have the exclusive authority in the event something happened on those tracks or is there a reason for that, any particular reason?

JOHN CAVANNA: No, just in case an agency wants to do its business, handle their business in their area, we’re there simply to help. Be happy to take the case, we’re there to assist any agency and the biggest thing I think this railroad police department would help with is teaching at POST so these officers that have to go on tracks throughout their daily duties know how to traverse track safely and know what to be aware of when they’re near the right of way of a moving train.
REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Thank you very much for your testimony and being here today.


SEN. CASSANO (4TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. John, thank you for coming back. I know you presented this last year as a concept and an idea to us. Since that, I’ve talked with several people. I’ve talked with you as well and I do have some questions that have been raised over a period of time. We’ll talk about the first law, the establishment of a new department, in effect, so we’re starting the new department from scratch. It’s been suggested that perhaps using POST as you have suggested in getting the training that various departments -- Manchester has train lines, Hartford, and so on. Those of us that have train tracks in our towns might in fact have some of our people go to POST benefit from the training at POST and our departments in turn would have somebody with some expertise in dealing with the railroad.

Last year you gave descriptions of some of the issues that happen, as in the property for example in Hartford, they call and you talk about literally kids going down to the property and pulling spikes out of the ground and all kinds of basic damage and so on, but if somebody from the Hartford police department was trained as a part of POST and their duty would have been to the property owners to oversee railroads for them. Then we would start to build up potentially statewide those areas where we have rail that force us to talk about it. It would be part of a department. The question that comes to me all the time is what are they going to do 40
hours a week as a department whereas if you’re part of a department with experience in this one area, you can do your job in the department as well as until we reach a crisis point or a point were we need “a department”. Would you be willing to look at something like that?

JOHN CAVANNA: Of course. When you look at Connecticut as a freight mover as a whole, your smaller entities that move freight, the different railroads throughout the side, Genesee and Wyoming, Connecticut Southern, Central New England, Pan American, Providence, Wooster, they combine to make one -- in essence, one large freight-moving entity, if you will. Your bigger railroads in the nation, CSX, Norfolk-Southern, they have their own police departments because they’re big enough, as would the joining of all these smaller departments, to have that full-time, 40-hour a week responsibility of checking so many different properties that aren’t accessed easily throughout the state, in edition to being certified to put more eyes on the track to help prevent any tragedy from occurring caused by a derailment. So I think there would be plenty of work to be done for a full-time entity such as a railroad police department.

SEN. CASSANO (4TH): And if, you mentioned as an example CSX, if there’s an incident or a problem on a CSX line, what authority do those rail police have in that community where the incident may have happened?

JOHN CAVANNA: So historically, railroad police agencies are all certified in the states they operate in, so even an agency that cross multiple states, they’ll have individuals assigned to their
railroad police department that are certified in each state and they’ll work their careers in that state, so they both dual-sworn; they’re federally sworn to the FRA and they're sworn through the municipal state government that runs that state that they’re providing police protection in.

SEN. CASSANO (4TH): Okay. And if today, as an example, there was an incident in a town where a CSX train had an incident in that community, is that a police incident or is that a CSX incident?

JOHN CAVANNA: For CSX railroad that has an established police department, it’s going to be a CSX railroad incident, CSX police.

SEN. CASSANO (4TH): And if depending on what the incident is, if it’s automobile, for example, I assume that the local police department will also have his role?

JOHN CAVANNA: Initially, it’s the first responders for the life-saving measures, but eventually if you have an established railroad with a railroad police department, they’re going to come and take that crash.

SEN. CASSANO (4TH): But in the meantime as you build, you have a team effort?

JOHN CAVANNA: Correct.

SEN. CASSANO (4TH): And that’s something, in looking at railroads, the word team effort is a foreign word. There have been multiple railroads that basically don’t talk to each other, don’t work with each other, so the municipality having some control and some training may, in fact, lead to exactly what you’re talking about, but I’m afraid
that just fiscally, number one, and psychologically number two, to try to create a department, new department, to do exactly what you’re talking about, which as we see more and more dependency on rail -- 97 percent of our food, 97 percent of our goods and services come to this state by truck, 97 percent. We’ve known that back since the study done by the gas costs 20, 25 years ago, that hasn’t changed. So there is going to be a greater demand on the rail, a demand for a service like this, but I think the idea of trying to deal with the police department over a period of time to build to get to that point might make sense as we move into that direction of long-term service. I appreciate you bringing it forward. Thank you.

JOHN CAVANNA: Thank you, Senator.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Representative Vail.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, good afternoon. Is this -- I look at this bill here, is -- do you need the legislature’s permission to start this police agency?

JOHN CAVANNA: Yes, sir.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Okay. And you mentioned the different, I think, our railroad, Genesee and Wyoming in my area, you mentioned all the different, so it would be, just to reiterate, it would be all the different rails together, one unit, one police department, would be a separate police department for each rail company. Is that correct?

JOHN CAVANNA: Yes, sir.

REP. VAIL (52ND): And do any of our neighboring states have anything like this?
JOHN CAVANNA: No, sir.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Again, so you had mentioned ATVs, I know there’s a state park right next to our rail lines and there are people that ride ATVs and motorcycles on our railways there, but it’s right on the Massachusetts border and they go in, so obviously they run off into Massachusetts, you’d have to stop or would you be allowed to pursue them into that state since they have no railroad authority?

JOHN CAVANNA: Like any police agency in the state of Connecticut, if you’re in the act of pursuit, you’d be allow to pursue over state lines.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Okay. And you work for Central New England Railroad?

JOHN CAVANNA: I do, sir.

REP. VAIL (52ND): And where do they go into -- where does that go through and where do they go from out state into another state, at what point of entry?

JOHN CAVANNA: They don’t cross state lines, sir, they’re insular to the state.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Okay. So are you familiar with Genesee and Wyoming, so they go through Stamford, it goes up into Munson, is there any talk of them getting with Massachusetts to kind of get on the same page and if so, could that be, I don’t know, is that anything you’ve discussed?

JOHN CAVANNA: Not anything, sir, as far as out of the state, no.
REP. VAIL (52ND): All right, you’ve answered my questions and a lot of the other questions, so thank you.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Thank you, Representative. Any other questions? Seeing none, thank you.

JOHN CAVANNA: Thank you.

REP. PAOLILLO (97TH): Next up Senator Witkos.

SEN. WITKOS (8TH): Good afternoon to the members of the Public Safety and Security Committee and thank you to the leadership for raising Senate Bill 664. I supplied some written testimony, but I wanted to provide some additional comments. You know, since 2011, 11 states have lifted restrictions on consumer fireworks and in the year 2000 when Connecticut legalized certain fireworks like the sparklers and the ground-based fountains, our Connecticut Department of Public Safety showed a 57 percent decrease in fireworks-related injuries in 2000 compared to the 147 cases prior to that legalization in Connecticut. States that allow for consumer grade fireworks have a great economic benefit from their sales. Pennsylvania, for example, when they expanded what could be sold in that state, their anticipated revenue went up by $7 million dollars.

In fact, when this bill was before us last year in general law, our Office of Fiscal Analysis estimated $755,000 dollar per year increase in revenues coming into the state of Connecticut because of the ability to sell these products. In this bill in particular, those funds would be dedicated to the Firefighter Cancer Fund and the regional fire training schools, which are so desperately in need of funding. In fact, at one of my meetings today, I heard that
there’s only enough money in the Firefighter Cancer Fund to cover only five firefighters, so the sixth one would not be able to be covered, so this would certainly take care of any of the needs of those individuals.

And I personally believe that the number of $755,000 dollars is on the low side because during the public hearing in General Law last year, a store owner from New Hampshire testified that over 40 percent of his customers are Connecticut residents, so they are certainly finding their way into our state. I believe the closest states that sell these products we’re looking to expand to are Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, and Maine. You’ll hear stories from the opposition, as you’ve already heard this morning, that fireworks will -- injuries will increase, but that happens no matter what it is, whatever the products happens to be and, in fact, over the past 15 years, there were a total of about 145,000 firework-related injuries, but if we look at just 2016, there was over 163,000 injuries for children between the ages of 2 and 15 just related to bicycles, so just to group it out that there are a lot of injuries I think does it a disservice.

You’ll also hear about potential of some deaths that occurred in 2011. Well if you dig into the reason why those deaths occurred, stupid acts by stupid people, I guess that’s the easiest way to frame it. Those deaths were somebody would take a mortar, put it on the top of their head and light it to see what would happen. They’d lay down on the beach bare-chested, put the mortar on their chest and light it off; well, what did you think was going to happen? Actually, they weren’t thinking, so we have to look at there’s inherent danger in every single thing
that we do. You may have heard references to a University of Iowa hospital and clinic study that concluded that fireworks-related injuries doubled in Iowa after they enhanced their fireworks law. They went from 10 to 21 related injuries, so while if you don’t put out all of that information, you kind of misled to what is the significance of this and the study was concluded with this comment: “there is not a statistically significant trend in estimated emergency department-treated firework-related injuries from the years involved in this study”.

So in conclusion, I ask that the Public Safety Committee affirmatively vote this bill out of committee and I remain open and willing to address concerns that the opponents have and we look forward to finding a sustainable and reliable source for our Firefighter Cancer Fund, regional fire training schools, and to address some of the concerns that the opponents of the bill may have. And with that, I will entertain any questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): I’m a firm believer that there’s two sides of every story and you certainly laid out the other side and we very articulate.

SEN. WITKOS (8TH): Thank you.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Thank you for that test. Representative Vail.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, Senator.

SEN. WITKOS (8TH): Good afternoon.

REP. VAIL (52ND): So I know -- I don’t know too many people that, you know, we have Stafford Lake in
my district and there’s a lot of illegal fireworks that go on there on the Fourth of July. How many people actually get arrested for bringing fireworks from New Hampshire down to Connecticut on an annual basis? Is there any statistics out there about that? I’ve never heard of too many people getting pinched for fireworks.

SEN. WITKOS (8TH): Yeah, I’m not aware. I will tell you as a former law enforcement office for 28 years, you know, we would get -- I almost call it nuisance calls. We had to go and investigate them because they are illegal, the ones that are aerial, in the state of Connecticut, but most often than not, police in the department that I worked for, we would take them, dump them -- seize them, not make an arrest, and put them in a bucket of water just to disable them and that would be the end of it.

REP. VAIL (52ND): It seems to me like the issue is that number one, people don’t really pay much attention to that law, probably a lot less than they do other laws and that I don’t think it’s strictly enforced on top of it. Would that be a fair statement do you think?

SEN. WITKOS (8TH): I think that would be fair and I think that you would see a certain time of the year where complaints would rise and I think you’d see a certain time of the year when purchases would increase, New Year’s Eve and celebration New Year’s Day and during the Fourth of July and maybe Memorial Day.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Okay, all right, thank you.

SEN. WITKOS (8TH): You’re welcome.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Representative Morin.
REP. MORIN (28TH): Hello, Senator.

SEN. WITKOS (8TH): Hello, Representative.

REP. MORIN (28TH): Thank you for your testimony. You know, I’ve gone back and forth and I really don’t have a hard position on this and in years past, I’ve been very much in favor of this, but, excuse me, I have -- many of my constituents call me very frustrated and I don’t know if that has anything -- I think it’s more with enforcement or lack thereof, but if we do open the state up to selling these, it’s just going -- I’m guessing it’s going to let things go on with no limitations. It concerns people who have small children, people who have dogs, people that worried about -- if you have a dog and fireworks and I know people are looking at me like I have three heads, but if you have a dog, fireworks pretty much many dogs send them over the deep end and it’s painful and if one thing you’ll know about Wethersfield if you come visit us, every other house has a dog.

What do we do on those issues and it is, you’re right, stupidity plays a lot -- into a lot of things go wrong, I won’t argue with that, but you talked about to Representative Vail, talked about the lake in his district, if you go down the shoreline for basically the week before Fourth of July and after, there is a massive display of not sparklers that are going on and I always think about the people that are lighting them off. My children are adults now, but I have grandchildren, so I’ve got to start thinking about what happens when this drunken fool lights this thing off and it goes off, those are concerns that I think are legitimate, that we have to talk about it. Would there by limits to when
they could go off, like are you saying -- are you proposing that it’s a year round thing?

SEN. WITKOS (8TH): Well, I think there’s limitations in the initial draft of the bill that have put some hours that those could be -- the activation of a firework could take place and I think it was between 5 p.m. and 10 p.m. with the exception of a few dates, New Year’s Eve and the Fourth of July.

REP. MORIN (28TH): But it could be -- it could be March 18? It could be October 13th, that’s my issue if this becomes something -- I mean, the onslaught of these fireworks just would never seem to end and so I think that’s something that I would ask people to consider. I don’t know if you’ve considered limiting when periods of time?

SEN. WITKOS (8TH): Well, I’m willing to work with anybody on the bill just to get us to where we need to, but that product is, as you’ve so eloquently stated, that massive amounts of fireworks along the beach occur, those people are purchasing them in another state sold year round, so if they wanted to do that, they could go on March 18th, say it’s somebody’s birthday, and bought some fireworks and I would look towards some of other states for some other things that -- I took last year’s language and threw it out for this purpose, but there are some other protections that I felt that I could entertain in the bill.

For example, you could only light the fireworks up on your own property unless you have permission from somebody else, so you couldn’t do it on state property, so state beaches, etc., you couldn’t do that. You could provide for a buffer of at least
300 feet between your, you know, where you’re lighting them off and another residence, so it would kind of take out some of the dense urban areas, so there is room for discussion. We just need to get it out of committee to have those discussions take place and it’s hard when you want to have a discussion with somebody and they say no and they’re not willing to engage in a dialog, so you have no other avenue other than just to come up with your own ideas, so I like to engage all the partners to have a conversation.

REP. MORIN (28TH): No, I understand, and I appreciate -- we’ve all run into that once or twice in our careers here, so I understand that and that’s a fair point. Like I said, it’s just my concern if I had to think about it would be is this something that would just occur, because right now, if I go out and I start lighting them off in Wethersfield tonight, the police are pretty much going to say hey, wait a second, what are you doing? Somebody is going to come by and have that conversation with me. In the areas around the holidays you’re alluding to, they couldn’t possibly do that.

There’s not enough law enforcement personnel on the streets to even consider unless it’s something that happens right in front of them and so if we do allow for sales and it is an event that -- an allowable 12 months of the year, I don’t know how that would go, but appreciate, you know, your take on this and I’ll certainly work with the committee members and keep an open mind.

SEN. WITKOS (8TH): Thank you.

REP. MORIN (28TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Okay, we’re all set. Thank you.

SEN. WITKOS (8TH): Thank you very much.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Chief Fusaro.

LOUIS J FUSARO: Good afternoon. My name is LJ Fusaro. I’m the chief of police in the town of Groton. Accompanying me is Chief Paul Melanson from Farmington. I’m here to speak about a couple of bills, the first of which is Senate Bill 707, AN ACT CONCERNING TRAFFIC STOPS. Every hour of every day, Connecticut’s police officers patrol streets and highways with the overarching goal of keeping our roads safe for traveling motorists while also ensuring a law enforcement presence that detects and deters criminal acts. A key component of that strategy is the fair and impartial enforcement of Connecticut’s motor vehicle laws. Since the passage of the PENN Act in 1999 and its successor bills, CPCA has been a key member of the Connecticut Racial Profiling Prohibition Project Advisory Board, which was established to address concerns about the possibility of racial profiling in Connecticut. Over these ensuing years, Connecticut police departments have worked with researchers, the advisory board, and advocacy groups to provide data, address issues, and ensure compliance. While CPCA remains committed to these efforts, additional requirements are not in the best interest of the public, nor the officers who have sworn to protect them.

Officers currently are required to report all traffic stops and provide motorists with reporting information should they believe they were stopped for an unlawful reason. This bill, and I quote,
“would require police officers to fill out each traffic stop report in duplicate so the motorist may immediately receive a copy of such form from the officer.” What this means in a practical sense is that the officer will be required to gather additional information from the motorist to validate his or her perception of the motorist’s race and ethnicity in order to generate this report. Officers must then extend the duration of a traffic stop and provide a written or electronically generated form.

This would -- For this to be practical and avoid an undue delay to the motorist, this would need to be part of an e-ticket or e-warning system. Many departments do not currently have this capability and may not have it in the near future due to costs associated with these systems. The alternative of developing yet another system to track paper forms is not practical and has already been problematic in the past when furnishing data to comply with the aforementioned public acts.

It is important to note that operator licenses do not contain written information on race nor ethnicity and the information the officer provides is based on their subjective perceptions. It is conceivable that an officer may provide or receipt two motorists that is inconsistent with their actual race and/or ethnicity, potentially causing a dispute between the parties. The Connecticut Police Chiefs Association remains committed to enhancing the accountability and transparency, but we believe that the requirements in this bill are unnecessary.

And if I may, Mr. Chair, another bill that you’re considering is House Bill 6952, AN ACT PROHIBITING
POLYGRAPH EXAMINATIONS AS A CONDITION OF EMPLOYMENT AS A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER. To note, the use of these employment -- pre-employment polygraphs that law enforcement is an essential and necessary tool for part of the background process. Pre-employment polygraphs allow agencies in employing chiefs the ability to keep violent criminals, sexual deviants, and dishonest applicants from becoming police officers. Pre-employment polygraphs also keep narcotics dealers, gang members, and members of domestic terrorist organizations from infiltrating our law enforcement. They’re a useful tool as pre-employment polygraphs ensure that the candidate is of the highest moral and ethical caliber to meet today’s public expectations of honesty and trustworthiness of police officers.

The communities we serve deserve only the most honorable men and women in our profession. It is necessary to maintain public trust and provide that in police service, therefore we are against any changes that would prohibit the use of polygraph examinations as a pre-employment tool for screening our applicants. Thank you.

PAUL MELANSON: I will make it brief. I submitted some written testimony on Senate Bill 402, AN ACT CREATING A STATE OFFICE TO INVESTIGATE COMPLAINTS AGAINST POLICE OFFICERS and the Connecticut Chiefs of Police Association is opposed to this bill. You know, the great majority of officers in the state of Connecticut serve their communities and perform their most difficult jobs with honor and pride, however, we do, as leaders of these organizations, understand that this is not always the case. It is our responsibility to hold these officers accountable and we believe that we have worked with
this committee and with POST in the last several years to create two bills, the first being Connecticut General Statute 7-294bb, which standardized the complaint process and the procedures and a mandatory minimum policy for law enforcement and then more recently, Public Act, last year, 18-161, which required POST to review these minimum policies and ensure all law enforcement agencies in the state are complying with these policies.

I do not believe that creating, besides costing a fortune -- Officers are due a timely and thorough investigation respecting their due process and I think that as agencies we do that and we do a very good job of it. I believe that we diminish the trust when we say that a police chief or his agency cannot investigate their own officers. We are all accountable to somebody. I have a town manager, a town council. We all have -- We have the State’s Attorney’s Office, we have CHRO commission. There are places that people can go if they do not want to go to the police department itself to complain, and so, you know, we feel that as a matter of trust, I take it upon myself to ensure that our officers are acting within our policies and procedures and we’d answer any questions on that.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): And Chief, just for the record, can you identify yourself?

PAUL MELANSON: Chief Paul Melanson from Farmington Police Department.

SEN. CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Thank you. I’m going to start with 707 and my experiences as a police officer, I used to write a lot of traffic tickets, a lot of traffic tickets, and to stop and have to do the report, do you feel that is a public safety danger?

PAUL MELANSON: Any time we prolong an officer’s interaction with a member of the public, particularly on a highway that’s got other vehicles operating on it, it’s always a dangerous thing. In fact, that is one of the more dangerous things our officers and do and it’s not through overt acts on the part of criminals, it’s through just the sheer fact that officers quite often get struck by motor vehicles that are traveling by them when they’re doing their ordinary duties and inattentive drivers, intoxicated operators, so it -- prolonging it is not just a danger to that officer, but it’s certainly a danger to the motorist and our intent is to expedite that interaction. If someone is getting a motor vehicle summons or an infraction, they have to issue that and get them on their way. If they’re taking them into custody for some other reason, then clearly it prolongs that, but there needs to be the requisite probable cause for that, we adore shorter traffic stops as a matter of course.

SEN. CHAMPAGNE (35TH): And I would do the same thing. You know, we issue the ticket that has the basic information, they can stop and get the report if they’d like, but staying on the side of the road puts that driver, myself, and anybody driving by in danger, so this is a public -- this creates a public safety problem right here and this -- we are here to make it so that we’re not creating that problem and I feel that, you know, I’m not in support of this
bill and I will oppose it and then talking about 6952, polygraph exam, can you, just out of quick memory, how many of your candidates in the past two years have you excluded because of that?

PAUL MELANSON: So I can talk from experience. I’m a polygraph examiner in a previous life when I worked for Farmington Police Department. I did it for nine years applicants and I would say that our failure rate was probably about 50 percent and when I say that, I’m not talking about actually failing the polygraph. I’m talking about they were -- had completed a background interview with the detectives and then their background packet was given to the polygraph examiner, myself, to review and then interview that candidate and most of my admissions came prior to the polygraph. Very few actually failed the polygraph, but they admitted to lying prior to the polygraph because they were about to take the polygraph, if that makes sense, so when they’re there after that interview with the trained detectives and, you know, they used to get mad because they thought they had the whole truth and then I would come out and say well, here’s what they admitted to, so they were -- it was very frequent that there were more admissions that came after the interview, but just before the polygraph.

SEN. CHAMPAGNE (35TH): How important is integrity in police work?

LOUIS J FUSARO: I think we’d both say it’s highly important. If I may just dovetail off what Chief Melanson said, sometimes people do not fail the polygraph, meaning they told the truth, but some of the items that they reveal in their admissions are incapable with law enforcement and not just
trustworthiness, but some of the things that they’ve done in their previous life, up to and including things that I’ve read in polygraphs that they were doing in their car prior to coming in for a polygraph, so things of that nature are not things that we want in our line of work and we’re living in an environment where people are expecting the most out of their law enforcement officers. To eliminate a tool we use every day to bring people into our profession to make sure they’re of the quality and caliber that the public expects I don’t think is a wise move.

SEN. CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Right. Mainly I’m just bringing that out so that everybody here in the community can hear it and you’ve got a couple of law enforcement people here. So, you know, again, this is another one that I oppose, so thank you. That’s my last question.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Representative Sredzinski.

REP. SREDZINSKI (112TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you both for being here today. Going after some of the questions that Senator Champagne, not Officer Champagne, was asking, how -- Sergeant, excuse me, how critical is it to have a tool that you can use in order to screen out any issues that could potentially be a part of your department in the future?

PAUL MELANSON: So, you know, I briefly testified on, you know, the bill about an office to investigate police officers. Obviously, the most important thing in our job is to hire the right people. That is number one in our job is to make sure we are -- when we equip somebody with a batch and a gun and give them the ability to take
somebody’s civil rights, to handcuff them, we have to make sure that we are getting the right people in, so that’s why I think, you know, as police departments, the importance to have those tools, the polygraph, the psychological, all the testing we do, the interview panels, it is of utmost importance to make sure because, you know, we’re talking about things that happened in Ferguson with officers over there, so when something happens in Connecticut, it doesn’t matter if it’s Groton or Farmington or wherever it is, it impacts all of us in law enforcement, so we take it -- it’s very valuable for us to make sure and important that we get the right people that will represent not only the town of Farmington or Groton, but also the state and the profession of law enforcement, so it’s very important.

REP. SREDZINSKI (112TH): And without the polygraph, do you feel that there could be a danger that some candidates that might not normally get through would get through and therefore would reduce the overall quality of policing?

PAUL MELANSON: Absolutely, absolutely, and, you know, I could tell story after story and I won’t bore you of polygraphs, but some of the people that we have filtered out with the polygraph as been absolutely -- they should not be wearing a badge and I was very proud to do that job.

REP. SREDZINSKI (112TH): Thank you very much, Chiefs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Representative Hall.

REP. HALL (59TH): Good afternoon to you both. First, I want to thank you for your service. My
husband is a police captain in Enfield on the Enfield Police Department and my son is a police officer in Northampton now, so I certainly understand a lot of the police issues and appreciate all your hard work. So I agree with the good senator to my left and my previous representatives that have spoken. As far as the polygraph goes, and certainly I can understand why the bill was proposed, I understand the issues we’re having with recruiting candidates right across the state. As you are well aware, we have a huge shortage and real issue trying to hire good people, so my question is more in the polygraph itself and the chief of police in each department are left with discretion of there are minor polygraph blips, if you will, to override the polygraph, correct? Do they have that opportunity?

LOUIS J FUSARO: That is correct. I mean, there are certain things, as I tell new applicants when we sit down and we offer them a conditional offer of employment to come on so that they can take this exam. You know, perfection is not something that I have, I don’t expect of it of others, but there are things, mistakes, that we can understand that may have happened some time ago that may be minor indiscretions or relatively, I don’t want to say innocuous offenses, but things that we can take into account in the totality of their background and realize, hey, that individual made a mistake, that shouldn’t have happened but it did, they’ve lived, they’ve learned, they did it in their youth. They were honest with us. You know, we can overcome that and departments and chiefs have different -- varying standards as to what’s acceptable. What I may find is something that I cannot hire an individual for,
you know, my counterpart from another city or town may say that’s acceptable to them, so there’s -- While there are some baseline standards, I would say there’s some -- there’s some gray area where we may have the ability to hire individuals who we’ve seen something on a polygraph exam. Untruthfulness is a different issue. If they’re not truthful, we have no indication that in the future they’d be truthful and they’d be able to testify in court, but other indiscretions that they may have had at other times in their life, we may be able to consider in the totality of what we’re looking at.

REP. HALL (59TH): And I appreciate those comments and just if you look to our good neighbors to the north and I would never disparage anybody that does this job, but the state police in Massachusetts have had some pretty serious issues up there with some corruption and from what I understand, Massachusetts does not polygraph their officers, if I’m correct -- if I’m incorrect, please correct me, but that something that’s so important. I think in the state of Connecticut, we have the highest standards for our police officers and we turn out the best, in my opinion and I’m a little biased, of course, but I think we truly have the best here and I think the polygraph adds to that.

The other bill, and I agree with my colleagues on this one, too, the oversight for any sort of investigations I think belong in the department. I think once you remove it out of the department and you have individuals that don’t understand the job or the procedures or have a crude idea of what should or shouldn’t be done, it turns it into a bit of a circus, so I appreciate the intent of the bill, however, just logistically, it just doesn’t make
sense, so I appreciate all your testimony. I agree with your opinions on all the bills you’ve testified here today and thank you for coming before us. Thank you very much.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Thank you. I do have a question. There’s a lot of talk around -- in this building about the legalization of marijuana and some of the issues surrounding someone who’s stopped, how you handle that from a law enforcement standpoint, but I’m not sure if anyone paid a lot of attention to how it might impact the hiring of police officers, in particularly the polygraph, and I think it’s fair to say that as part of a polygraph examination, there are questions in that exam relative to the use of drugs. I think it’s fair to say, and correct me if I’m wrong, it’s been a while, but it’s fair to say that some of those questions pertain to the use of marijuana. Correct?

LOUIS J FUSARO: Correct.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): And if a law was passed, the legalization of marijuana, if marijuana became legal in the state of Connecticut, how does that impact the polygraph? Have you thought about that at all? Like something that -- if someone used marijuana ten years ago that in today’s day, would disqualify them, but yet, now it’s legal tomorrow, for example, how do you see that working out?

PAUL MELANSON: So what we’re more concerned with is the person who used marijuana last night and it’s legal and is now coming in for a job, right, so now all of a sudden or they use it in the car just before they came in for the interview and, you know, there’s obviously a lot of states have now started to adopt it and there’s new laws coming out and what
we’ve been following is, so a police officer if they have medical marijuana, how are we supposed to then -- you know, how are we supposed to then enforce that when they come in the next day having smoked marijuana the day before because if you’re involved in a shooting, we draw blood and now there’s marijuana in the system and then who’s to say that they, you know, weren’t under the influence when that happened, so there is a whole host -- and I would say it’s not just law enforcement, but obviously for us, it has life and death implications, but also I know the people who work construction and with heavy equipment are very concerned because their lives, when the guys with the crane is above with the steel -- they’re concerned about it and we’ve had those discussions and what we be enable to enforce in law enforcement if marijuana was legalized. So there are obviously a lot of questions and I think other states are now seeing that it’s not as clear-cut as they thought as it’s making its way through the civil litigation system.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): So as a state, if we were to legalize -- Chief, I’ll get to you in a second, if we were to legalize marijuana, it will obviously impact the polygraph, the types of questions, etc.?

PAUL MELANSON: Yes, absolutely.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): So apparently that will change. You had, a follow-up, you had mentioned if someone fails a polygraph that the chiefs have discretion in some instances. In some cases, no, right, and what comes to mind, say someone is involved in the sale of marijuana or other drugs, is that an automatic disqualifier or would you --
PAUL MELANSON: So to each department, they have their own we’ll say baseline. For us, sale of drugs is, so if you admitted to the sale of drugs -- I think what we were talking about is if somebody -- and -- so most police officers have to pass a polygraph and I’ve had many, many, many, many fail the polygraph and then we discuss that area of why they failed the polygraph and then we give them the polygraph again or we’ll send them to another polygraph examiner for retesting to ensure that now they are being truthful and if it was a minor issue, something that we -- then we can obviously deal with that. Sometimes we need to tell them to put time and space away. If it’s a 22-year-old who didn’t want to tell you that, you know, three weeks ago at a college party they smoked marijuana, now they’re telling you they did, we would tell them they need to put time and distance away from that, so we would not hire them right then, but then they would be subject to a polygraph let’s say in a year they come back, those sorts of things.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): And chief, did you want to comment?

LOUIS J FUSARO: The only analogy I would draw is we deal with that now with alcohol, right, were they of age when they were drinking, you know, to what degree, the frequency, how long ago it was, were they operating a motor vehicle where they were doing unsafe acts, so there’s -- I would make that comparison to marijuana. We’re going to ask those same questions now or later, whether it’s legal or illegal. There are some times where we exercise some of our discretion to say hey, this officer or this potential officer exercised some poor judgment in their youth, but there has been time and distance
where we’ve decided that yes, we’re going to hire this officer because the rest of the background on this individual seems to be compatible. They understand what they did was wrong, but I really think there is a strong comparison to alcohol because people -- we do look at judgment, right, and do people exercise poor judgment, did they do things that maybe they regret, but we have some evidence that this past performance will be an indication of what they’re going to do in the future, so to answer your question, is it a concern? Absolutely, but we have similar concerns with other legal substances now.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): All right. I’m sure we’ll continue that very important conversation if in fact the state were to legalize marijuana and look how it particularly impacts law enforcement and the job that you guys do. Any other questions? Great, thank you very much. Appreciate it. Representative Buckbee.

REP. BUCKBEE (67TH): Good afternoon. This is a quiet room. I’ve been full of big, loud rooms all morning with testimony with different committees. It’s great to see some smiling faces I’ve been sitting with and testifying with the last couple of days. Hope you’ve all gotten some rest as well. I have two bills we’ve brought before, the first of which is the reason I’ve brought some wonderful friends with me to describe a little bit more about what we’ve brought forward and I’m trying to grab my number here, this is regard to House Bill 5455, AN ACT CONCERNING QUALIFIED FOREST FIREFIGHTERS and I’m going to, at this point, pass the testimony to my friend, Sergio Ligori, who is my friend for 30 plus
years, a trained forest firefighter and a pretty knowledgeable guy. I’ll pass it over to him.

SERGIO LIGORI: Yes, good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity today for me to speak on behalf of the Bill 5455 and I submitted my testimony and I’m sure if you haven’t read it yet, you will. I’m basically, you know, I get to go out west whenever it’s cold to duty is called with Department of DEEP, but I belong to a fire department or a volunteer fire department, but there is a program where I am allowed to take the pack test and become a wildland firefighter and I do that pack test every year and get re-certified according to the federal government that requires us, but I cannot fight fires in the state of Connecticut.

Right now the way it stands, if we have a fire, then DEEP is called to it because the local fire department can no longer handle because it has gotten out of hand, it has gotten bigger. They will call DEEP employees and they will come out of their position, whatever their position are in the DEEP department, to go there. A lot of times, it’s only three to four guys, maybe five guys. When we go out west, we got a crew of 20 to a certain assignment wherever we do and I’m looking to get this bill passed and look at it so I can be able to help out, you know, my fellow firefighters from the DEEP department and I believe Mike, he has a little bit more to share and thank you very much for the opportunity.

MICHAEL KRONICK: Deputy Chief Michael Kronick, Westport Fire Department. I’m here today speaking on behalf of Bill 5455, AN ACT CONCERNING QUALIFIED FOREST FIREFIGHTERS. I’m also representing the
Fairfield County Fire Chiefs Emergency Plan and I’m also a longtime volunteer firefighter in Trumbull. I also have submitted written testimony. I’m not going to read it word for word, but the state of Connecticut has and maintains trained and qualified forest firefighters for its own use and also to help in national need, particularly in the western United States during the summer months and this crew has been around for about 25 years and has been very successful. Unfortunately, there is no administrative way to allow the individuals who don’t work for DEEP in deploy to fight fires here in Connecticut.

And you may ask yourself why would we need this? Typically, New England is relatively wet. We do not see large fires that we -- the western United States has, but occasionally weather and drought come into alignment and we do run the risk of having fires in the -- excuse me, Connecticut. Like I said, unfortunately, there is no way administratively for DEEP to take the people who don’t work for DEEP and deploy them in Connecticut to fight wildfires and what we’re hoping is for a piece of legislation that will allow the Department of Environmental and Energy, they change it all the time, it seems like, to hire on an emergency basis the trained and qualified firefighters that already exist that they have already trained. I would imagine it would use its system, not unlike what they use to vet the individuals to be part of the crew that goes to the western United States where we would actually become temporary emergency employees and would be covered by the state agency to help fight fire in that time of need.
RACHEL HOLMES: Good afternoon, thanks for hanging in there. My name is Rachel Holmes and I’m a type 2 wildland firefighter with the Connecticut Interstate Fire Crew and I’m also a former employee of the DEEP Division of Forestry. I’m also speaking in favor of House Bill 5455 and there are three reasons that I would like your consideration of this bill, the first of which is that as my colleagues have already pointed out, we are a well-trained force that can fight wildfires. Many of us have brought extensive training through the program, but in addition to that, experience fighting fires in high-risk situations out west. Additionally, many of us have a conservation or a firefighting background that allows us to bring additional skills to the table to fight wildfire.

Second reason, yes, New England is a wet state, however, as the number of firefighters is going down, because of climate change and other factors, the risk of severe wildfires is increasing and thirdly, by allowing certified firefighters to fight in-state, you’re allowing us additional opportunities to increase our own qualifications and skills, which will make us a more efficient force on in-state wildfires. Thank you.

ALLAN OLENICK: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, of the Public Safety and Security Committee. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak to the Proposed House Bill 5455. My name is Allan Olenick and I reside in the town of Lebanon, Connecticut. I’m a member of the Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department and currently hold the position of assistant fire chief. Lebanon covers an area of 55 square miles and is the tenth largest town in Connecticut. Lebanon is a rural
residential agricultural community, Mooween State Park, Pomeroy State Park, Bartlett Brook wildlife management area, and Pease Brook wildlife area, all totaling 1,677 acres, plus five at Woodland, and open grasslands within the town boundaries.

During the spring and fall, fire activity within the state generally increase due to lower humidity, winds, warm, temperatures, and little or no leaf canopy allowing wood and grasslands to dry out and create a greater fire risk. When a fire starts, the local fire department responds and if needed, mutual aid departments and the DEEP respond. The DEEP crew consists of a fire supervisor and staff plus available equipment. If multiple fires within the state are in progress, DEEP crews and equipment would be stretched thin. As an additional resource, the Connecticut Forest Firefighters, known as the Connecticut Interstate Fire Crew, could be called to assist.

Secondly, I am a Connecticut wild and firefighter. Since 2001, I’ve had at least 12 18-day assignments to many of the western states and one in Quebec, Canada. Each crew member must be trained to federal wildland firefighting standards. All crew members must pass an annual pack test wearing 45 pounds of weighted vests swiftly walking three miles within 45 minutes. Initially, a firefighter must attend a basic wildland firefighting 40-hour course and seasoned firefighters must attend an annual eight-hour refresher. Firefighters are issued a red card listing qualifications and emergency contact information. Additional training on equipment, higher level of firefighting tactics or supervisory responsibilities are available and most firefighters take advantage of the higher skills. When deployed
to an assignment, we represent ourselves, our communities, and we are ambassadors of the state of Connecticut. Prior to leaving an assignment, the entire crew is rated by the federal agency responsible for the crew assignment. We are held to higher standards and perform appraisals reflect that.

Regarding House Bill 5455, I respectively urge the Public Safety Committee members to favor the ability to utilize the highly trained Connecticut wildland firefighters to work within the state when the need arises.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Thank you, sir. I just want to make everyone aware of the fact that we do have about four pages left of public comment and we try to limit public comment to three minutes, so I’m going to try to be a little bit stricter with that and not to disrespect anybody, but I’m sure there are members of the committee might want to ask questions, so don’t feel that your testimony is your only shot, but thank you, sir, for your comments, it’s appreciated, and with that, we’ll open up with any questions if there’s any from the members of the committee? Seeing none, we appreciate it. Thank you very much.

REP. BUCKBEE (67TH): Senator, there was a second bill to that, just very quickly, we didn’t have time to form it in advance and I apologize. We ran a little bit long with this. I submitted House Bill 5456. I’m not going to go into great detail for you. I ask you to take a look at this. Basically as a -- outside of this building, we’re not a legislature. I’m also an executive director of a nonprofit agency and we have a temporary event we do
Each year. It’s a haunted trail and we have a temporary -- we have a full-time pavilion on property for that. We’re not allowed to use that for the haunted trail because it doesn’t meet up with the fire code according to temporary structure in the way it’s written now, so my suggestion, and I’ve written in my testimony, you have the bill. It’s actually fairly important because that can hold a wedding in that same venue and I can’t turn around and add venting sides to the pavilion and use it for a same use during a temporary structure, during a temporary event.

It’s actually venue with so many nonprofits across the state. They’re trying to find something in there. As an inactive volunteer firefighter myself, I’ve been through the training, I know what the rules are and the ventilation can be taken care of. We were quoted outrageous numbers of putting a sprinkler system into a pavilion, so it’s something that we need to take a look at. I think it’s something presented before you and I appreciate your time at taking a peek at that. I’m happy to answer any questions on this either now or down the road when you’re not taking the time constraints we all are today.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): All right. Thank you very much. Next on the list, we have Chief Jim Kenny.

JIM KENNY: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, distinguished members here. With me is Chief Boulter, who is going to be discussing the CPCA’s position regarding a bill, 5149. I am here to talk about 702, Senate Bill 702 regarding the transfer of records between agencies. I’ve submitted some written testimony, so I’ll keep my testimony here
very brief. It is the position of the CPCA and I have spoken with Commissioner Ravella and I’ve actually spoken with a staff attorney at the Freedom of Information agency. We are looking to just amend the FOIA laws to allow for the transfer of reports between law enforcement agencies. A large concern on many agencies is the improper dissemination of police reports to the public without still meeting the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act.

The proposal here is basically to put the onus on the agency receiving the reports to adequately ensure that the reports are disseminated under the Freedom of Information Act properly to the public. It relieves the first agency of that liability and we believe that this is going to allow us to receive timely reports from different agencies that otherwise sometimes are bogged down with legal review and cause many issues when dealing with investigations on the part of law enforcement agencies. I’m going to conclude the testimony there. My comments are written and have been submitted for your review.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Thank you very much, Chief. Are there any questions? Go ahead, Senator Champagne.

SEN. CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Thank you. Chief, this is just to speed up the process of getting the records and basically shielding agency which slows it down, have you ever had -- what is longest stretch of time you’ve had trying to get a record from another police department?

JIM KENNY: There have been instances where I have not received reports for up to two and a half years from agencies. It’s been bogged down in legal
review. I’ve had meetings with other agencies. I asked to meet with their legal staff to discuss the ramifications of releasing reports. It makes for a very difficult process sometimes when the legal review gets involved as to when we can get the reports. I assure people that I would be releasing reports under the requirements set forth in the Freedom of Information Act, but their concerns over liability precluded the timely release of their reports.

SEN. CHAMPAGNE (35TH): So basically, what this is doing is it’s speeding the process up and making whoever receives those reports responsible for them. There is no financial impact whatsoever on anybody, is there?

JIM KENNY: No, there’s no financial impact, nor is there any changes to what reports can be released. We’re not asking for any timely changes or any changes to the FOIA act itself other than the liability issue here.

SEN. CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Thank you.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Any further questions? Seeing none, thank you very much. Thank you, Chief, we appreciate it. I’m not sure who you are. The next person on my list is Claire Coleman, so I’m assuming you’re not Claire Coleman?

NICK BOULTER: I am not.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Okay, so if you could just identify yourself for the record, I’d appreciate it.

NICK BOULTER: Chief Nick Boulter with the Simsbury Police Department.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Okay, thank you very much.
NICK BOULTER: I’m here to speak about Proposed Bill No. 5149, AN ACT CONCERNING MEETINGS OF BOARDS OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS. Simsbury is one of a small number of municipalities in Connecticut that have a police commission. The responsibilities of a police commission vary slightly among communities based on town charters and other governing documents. What is common among all police commissions is common among all of us. It’s the desire and need to perform our elected and appointed positions in an efficient and effective manner. Communities depend on these volunteers to play a crucial role in personnel matters, such as selection, promotion, discipline and termination, or policies, budgets, complaints, and community relations, but these members are volunteers who often have full-time jobs and other commitments.

My personal experience is that police commissions need flexibility in order to meet the demands of the department and the needs of the community. My police commission has regularly scheduled monthly meetings, but they also have special meetings due to timely matters that arise, whether the meeting is for the approval of a new employee or to deal with a personnel matter. They have met at different times of the day, different days of the week, and in different locations if need be. We are fortunate to have a meeting facility that is not often used by others, but if that were the case, the commission would find another location for that meeting. Police commissions need this flexibility to meet and perform their duties under state statute without unreasonable restrictions on locations and times that they can meet. Thank you.
SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Any questions? Seeing none, thank you very much, Chief. We appreciate your testimony. Next on the list, we have Miss Claire Coleman. Thank you, and can you just hit the mic please? There you go, you got it.

CLAIRE COLEMAN: Is that better? Great. Vice-Chair Osten, ranking members, and members of the esteemed committee, thank you for having me today. My name is Claire Coleman. I’m an attorney with Connecticut Fund for the Environment. We are a state-focused environmental organization that uses science and legal analysis to protect our air, land, and water. I am an attorney focusing on climate and energy issues, so I’m here today to focus on a critical public safety issue that you may not hear about often, but I suspect will be coming before your committee more and more and that is climate change and what you can do to help support our efforts to mitigate climate change in this state and that would be by supporting S.B. 771, AN ACT ADDING REQUIREMENTS FOR ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING PARKING SPACES TO THE STATE BUILDING CODE.

So EV adoption is a critical climate change and pollution mitigation strategy in the state. We desperately need more electric vehicles and electric buses in this state to address our greenhouse gas admissions. Currently transportation sector actually contributes 38 percent of our greenhouse gas emissions in this state, so we really need to focus as a state on specific policy tools that will help bring emissions down in the transportation sector and of course, EV is one of those critical tools. In addition to greenhouse gas emissions, transportation is also the largest single source of other air pollutants in the country, imposing a
major barrier to the health and safety of our residents, especially those who live along our highways and suffer from all the traffic congestion and pollutants connected to that.

So transitioning to EVs in this state will be good for the health of our public -- of our residents and it will also be good for our economy and I have some more details in my written testimony about how EV deployment will also help create jobs, save consumers money whether you’re an EV driver or not by helping bring down electric rates, so I welcome your look at that. So that brings me to building codes. Building codes are actually a really effective and low-cost strategy for states to encourage consumers to buy or lease electric vehicles. I drive an electric vehicle and last year I could up to the LLB, no problem, and be sure I’d plug in -- I’d get a plug, this year not so much. The chargers are often full and that’s because EV deployment in the state has actually rapidly increased.

In 2018, the growth rate for battery electric vehicles was 91 percent, so we really have to prepare for a world where our residents are going to be driving electric vehicles and to do that we need our building codes to model and require that we have electric vehicle charging infrastructure and it’s more cost effective to do that upfront rather than having to retrofit all the buildings and parking lots. So for that reason I’m here and I’m happy to answer any questions you have.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Thank you very much. Yes, recognizing Representative Vail.
REP. VAIL (52ND): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon. I’m looking through the legislation and it says here that it would require a one to three family home to have at least one vehicle-ready parking space. Is that my understanding?

CLAIRE COLEMAN: Correct.

REP. VAIL (52ND): So would that be a private home? So if built my own home, I would be required to have at least one space where I could plug in a car even if I chose not to have one?

CLAIRE COLEMAN: That’s correct and actually currently, we have on statute Public Act 13-298, which already actually requires that for a resident, so it hasn’t been implemented in this state, so we’re looking to implement that and also expand the commercial and multi-family vehicle.

REP. VAIL (52ND): And then I see if there was a family of three or more, that 50 percent of the parking spaces would have to have that hookup as well?

CLAIRE COLEMAN: Correct, that’s what we’re suggesting. That’s what S.B. 771 suggests.

REP. VAIL (52ND): So obviously there would be an added cost to developers and all that other stuff. Who is going to bear the expense? I assume the consumer?

CLAIRE COLEMAN: In most cases, yeah, the consumer. If you look at any example of cost benefit analysis, the cost to install a charger ranges from $900 dollars to maybe $1,300 dollars, including all the wiring and structure wares. If you have to retrofit, we’re talking about, you know, upwards of
$3,000 dollars depending on the needs and the conduit and the raceways, so you know, it is a cost saving in the long-term.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Okay, thank you.

CLAIRE COLEMAN: Thank you.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Any further questions? Senator Osten.

SEN. OSTEN (19TH): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I have a couple questions. In -- I’m not certain where you come from, what town you live in, but what -- are you suggesting that small rural towns who may not have any electricity going to a parking lot, I know a couple of those, are you suggesting that they would have to put poles in and electricity out to parking lots in order to provide some sort of -- it’s not that I -- I think electric vehicles are great, but who is going to pay for all of those?

CLAIRE COLEMAN: So in most cases, charging infrastructure doesn’t require utility infrastructure support. It sounds like the scenario you’re describing may.

SEN. OSTEN (19TH): Yeah.

CLAIRE COLEMAN: So places with no electrical wiring at all --

SEN. OSTEN (19TH): Correct.

CLAIRE COLEMAN: -- into a parking lot?

SEN. OSTEN (19TH): Correct.

CLAIRE COLEMAN: Well, most -- So these are connected to residential and commercial buildings,
so I don’t think that would trigger that scenario because --

SEN. OSTEN (19TH): Commercial buildings like the library?

CLAIRE COLEMAN: Correct, a library that has at least 11 parking spaces.

SEN. OSTEN (19TH): So if the library is an older building, I’m just going to carry this through.

CLAIRE COLEMAN: Okay.

SEN. OSTEN (19TH): The library is an older building, a 1700’s building, then we would take the electricity from that building and drag it out into the parking lot?

CLAIRE COLEMAN: You -- That’s one scenario, yes, to share the electric load of the library.

SEN. OSTEN (19TH): But if they didn’t bother to improve the parking lot of all, they wouldn’t have to do it?

CLAIRE COLEMAN: Correct. So this would be apply to new buildings or buildings or lots that are undergoing retrofits that include wiring upgrades, so any current standing facility wouldn’t be required to go out and retrofit with EV wiring. It’s only those that are undergoing construction or new buildings.

SEN. OSTEN (19TH): So if they were putting a parking lot in, but didn’t have a building structure there, they wouldn’t have to worry about this, like a park, some other place that doesn’t have a building on site, like a local community park.
CLAIRE COLEMAN: That’s how I read it and I’d be happy to work with you on clarifying language to make sure that we’re not imposing that burden on those smaller communities without the electrical infrastructure associated with a typical commercial building or residential building.

SEN. OSTEN (19TH): Okay. I just wanted to make sure we’re not barring people from fixing some of the infrastructure that they may have and again, I don’t disapprove of electric vehicles, I just look at the cost of it and some small towns may not even then bother to improve what parking they do have if it’s close to a local park or some other, you know, they don’t even have running water there or anything along those lines.

CLAIRE COLEMAN: Well, I understand your concerns. I do think we have to think about the future of the state and attracting clean technologies and people who want to adopt those, so there’s always --

CLAIRE COLEMAN: I can tell you, I put a 20-megawatt solar facility in the town and I got more complaints about that solar facility than anything else, even though it brought in $200,000 dollars-worth of revenue for the town, so I just pointed out that there are, you know, I get the concept. I can tell you that there are people who are going to be strongly opposed, in particular in some of the smaller rural towns that feel that this is not something that they’re interested in doing right now. I do think we should look towards the future, but I’m a little bit concerned on passing this to municipalities. Right now, I’m willing to have a conversation with you after this, but I really -- I saw this come out and I was very concerned about
that long-term what we’re going to do and how we’re going to do it and what you perceive as the impact and maybe I’m concerned for no reason, but having been a town that now has an MS4 permit requirement, added on about $10,000 dollars-worth of expenses, I can’t afford another expense like this, so.

CLAIRE COLEMAN: Yeah, I do think -- oh, I’m sorry.

SEN. Osten (19TH): But I appreciate your concern. Thank you.

CLAIRE COLEMAN: Yeah, I’d be glad to follow up. I do think this intended to address the multifamily dwellings and commercial spaces that do have, you know, sufficient electrical capacity, but I’m happy to work with you on ways to make sure that that’s the case.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Representative Camillo

REP. CAMILLO (151ST): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good afternoon.

CLAIRE COLEMAN: Good afternoon.

REP. CAMILLO (151ST): I love the concept, I really do, but the things that’s really bothering me is, you know, these three multifamily homes, you know, the one to three families, you know, I know ultimately we’re looking at cost savings, it’s the right thing to do for the environment and the investment in the state and all that, but you’re still mandating a cost to the homeowner. Have you thought about any type of incentive, like we do in other areas where, you know, maybe they could be incentivized to do this, where they can get some money to pay for this?
CLAIRE COLEMAN: So our municipalities have -- there have been incentive programs through the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, I think they’re great, certainly they’re -- As you know, the amount of funds available to the state to give incentives is limited, so that is one avenue, but you know, I think the dozens of states and cities that have done this have found that the benefits far outweigh the costs and this is, you know, we won’t -- we won’t get enough EVs on the road to meet our state mandates for emissions reductions unless people see that there are charging infrastructure accessible. You know, it’s sort of a chicken and egg question, so we really need to break through this barrier to meet so many other challenges that the state faces that have -- will have a tremendous economic benefit to the state.

REP. CAMILLO (151ST): I don’t think anybody here disagrees with that and we do know there are limited funds, but at the end of the day, people are struggling still and yet this is making it harder for them, mandating it. It’s a little heavy-handed, I think, so I like -- I’m a hundred percent with you on the goal of this. I think we have to find a better way, so for that reason I would oppose it, but only for that reason. I just want to make sure that, you know, people again are not -- you know, we’re talking about tolls and this and that and this tax and that tax. This doesn’t help, even though I’m sure most -- almost the overwhelming of majority of people would agree with the intent of this and the goal.

CLAIRE COLEMAN: So I think we would happy to work with the committee on other measures that could help achieve some of these -- some of these goals or
even, you know, work on the specific requirements in here. I will say that even the Connecticut building codes process intends to -- in 2020 intends to follow the International Code Council does have some EV readiness requirements, not quite as ambitious as this bill proposes, but I do think it is our future and a cost, just like we calculate costs of, you know, putting other lights and wiring and infrastructure that are essential -- as more EVs are deployed, this is going to be an essential service for our residents, so I look forward to working with you.

REP. CAMILLO (151ST): Same here. Thank you for your answers and your time.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Thank you, Representative. Anyone else with questions? No? Thank you very much, Ma’am, for your testimony.

CLAIRE COLEMAN: Thank you

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): I believe there’s a representative here that has testimony you’d like to present, Representative Polletta.

REP. POLLETTA (68TH): Thank you so much. I’ll be very brief. Co-Chairs Bradley and Verrengia, Vice-Chairs Osten and Paolillo, Ranking Members Hwang and Sredzinski, and distinguished members of the Public Safety and Security Committee, thank you for allowing me to submit testimony in support of H.B. 5362, AN ACT INCREASING PENALITIES FOR THE INJURING OR KILLING OF POLICE ANIMALS. Our police departments spend an average of $12,000 to $20,000 dollars purchasing and training a single police service dog canine. These dogs are long-term investment, providing protection and security to our
communities. They can be used to detect drugs, bombs, and firearms as well as missing people or fleeing suspects. These well-trained animals are valuable resources to our public safety and need to be better protected by the law.

By increasing the penalties for the injuring or killing of police animals, the state of Connecticut would be sending a message that it will not tolerate such actions. Increasing these repercussions to a substantial penalty would assist in better protecting our police animals and further sustaining their role within our police departments. I appreciate your time and I just want to make also a few remarks here aside from my testimony. We had a wonderful canine in Watertown named Enso recently was put down, but what a tremendous part of police department he was. I think the current law right now is a maximum of ten years or $10,000 dollar fine. Anyone who appreciates a canine and is a lover of animals, like myself, knows that this is just unacceptable. These canines are, in essence, taking the place of a police officer on many occasions, so I think we should, again, send a message to the public that we support our police officers and furthermore, we value the work that the canines do. Thank you.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): I believe Representative Vail has -- you are recognized, sir.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, Representative.

REP. POLLETTA (68TH): Good afternoon.

REP. VAIL (52ND): It doesn’t get specific in here as to what -- What did you have in mind? If it’s
currently ten years and a $10,000 dollar fine, what would you like to see that be?

REP. POLLETTA (68TH): I mean, of course it’s up to the committee to draft it, but I think a 20-year sentence maximum would be very acceptable. I think that would certainly deter someone even further about if they even have a thought of harming these animals because again, I will reiterate it, they’re part of our police departments across the state. We, as a municipality, I spent six years on the town council in Watertown, spend a lot of money training these animals, so we should treat them as if they were human.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Thank you.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Anyone else? Yes, Senator Cassano, the floor’s yours.

SEN. CASSANO (4TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just off the top of my head, I don’t remember the number, but I recall last year we did pass a bill involving Seeing Eye dogs being attacked and destroyed and if I recall, the penalty was the replacement cost of the dog because the training costs are anywhere between $20,000 and $40,000 dollars depending on what the dog is. In this area, it’s closer to $40,000 dollars. The fine should cover the cost of that training and I don’t think there’s any question that that’s the right thing to do.

REP. POLLETTA (68TH): Thank you.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Anyone else? Seeing none, thank you, sir. I appreciate it, Representative. Next on the list we have Ann Smart. Chief Rob Rosado. And if you gentlemen could just, as you take turns to speak, I’m assuming, if you could just
identify yourself for the record as you speak, okay? Thank you very much.

ROBERT ROSADO: Good afternoon, Chairman, committee members. My name is Rob Rosado, chief of police for the Willimantac Police Department. I’m here to speak on two bills. The first, we support -- The testimony I’m providing today is on behalf of the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association in support of House Bill No. 5152, AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY TO DETERMINE A WAY TO DETECT WHEN A DRIVER IS UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF MARIJUANA. The CPCA believes a study in determine when an operator is impaired by marijuana is necessary as an official tool for law enforcement to ensure that the public is protected from operating under the influence of marijuana. Currently the issue of marijuana-impaired driving is not adequately addressed within the current statutory scheme because there is no objective measure regarding the marijuana impairment levels when it comes to operating a motor vehicle.

As the neighboring state of Massachusetts has recently legalized marijuana for recreational use, there is an overwhelming concern for incidents of drug driving will increase in Connecticut as a result. Additionally, Massachusetts recognized that marijuana-impaired driving has not been adequately addressed within the current statutory scheme and they recently conducted a study regarding the current approach to detecting an operating under the influence of marijuana and potential recommendations to better evaluate marijuana-impaired drivers. The CPCA has an obligation to protect the community by reinforcing safe driving habits and conducting this study would enable law enforcement agencies across
Connecticut to implement the best practices regarding marijuana-impaired driving.

The second bill we oppose, the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association is in opposition of House Bill No. 5540, AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF FORCE REPORTS. The Connecticut Police Chiefs Association believes in transparency and oversight, but this bill would have negative financial implications on police departments and local communities. This is another unfunded mandate requiring police departments to track, collect, and report use of force data to another agency. Police departments in towns across the state lack the financial resources to increase their budgets and their staff is not prepared for an increase in workload.

Police departments already have oversight and submit police use of force reports to outside agencies. Officers submit reports and use of force reports to the State’s Attorney’s Office when a subject escalates a situation and an officer is required to use force to effect an arrest. These reports are provided to the offender and his or her defense counsel through legal proceedings. When an officer uses deadly physical force, police departments are required to notify the State’s Attorney’s Office and an investigation is conducted by a different State’s Attorney’s Office outside the department’s jurisdiction.

Police departments are submitting Taser use of force reports to the Institute for Municipal and Regional Police at the Central Connecticut State University. At times, officers must use minimal force necessary to restrain an individual and place them in protective custody because it is believed that the
individual has a mental illness and is a danger to themselves or others. We also submit reports and provide them to the hospital staff and ambulance personnel. In addition, as of January 2019, the Federal Bureau of Investigation created data collection for use of force by police officers in their uniform crime reports.

Therefore, law enforcement has reporting and procedures in place for oversight to ensure quality of service to our communities. The Connecticut Police Chiefs Association continues to commit to transparency, ensuring public trust.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Thank you, Chief. I don’t know if members of the committee -- Yes, Representative Vail.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regards to House Bill 5152 and I think that’s a huge concern of mine, I know a lot of my colleagues as well, but you mentioned Massachusetts has to come up, but there are other states that have legalized marijuana long before this. Does any state have a standard for testing what their adequate amount of marijuana would be for, you know, driving impaired?

ROBERT ROSADO: Not to my -- Not to my knowledge.

REP. VAIL (52ND): And if you currently pulled someone over, what method do you use now, a field sobriety test? Is that your -- really your only recourse that you have?

ROBERT ROSADO: We have drug recognition experts now. We have one within our department. They would come out and perform the field sobriety test.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Okay. Thank you.
LOUIS J FUSARO: I’m Chief LJ Fusaro from the town of Groton, but also just to be clear on that, most arrests is when we use drug recognition experts. They’re trained to do additional testing for individuals that we bring in that under the influence of some substance. If our officers out in the field that fail a field sobriety test or there’s probable cause to make an arrest, they’re brought into the station where additional tests are conducted by those individuals that have that specialized training, so, you know, just to be clear, that’s a post arrest act as opposed to something that develops probably cause, so the issue that we really have is establishing that probably cause using those standardized tests that we have for alcohol when someone’s out in a motor vehicle they’re operating and an officer stops them for some reason and makes an arrest. We have a standard for alcohol under the standardized field sobriety tests, which consists of a walk and turn test, horizontal gaze nystagmus, walking -- one-leg stand, and some other tests that lead an officer to establish that probable cause to make an arrest and if that individual decides they’re not going to submit to a chemical test, which is blood, urine, or breath test, then that is probable cause for the arrest. A drug recognition experts is a useful tool. We have one in our agency as well, but that really is -- they have additional training that allows them to do that after the arrest is made.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Yeah, and it’s understandable and obviously that’s going to be a major issue going forth. At the same time, I want to protect people’s rights as well if they’re not under the influence, that they’re not being brought in when they probably
shouldn’t be, so that’s a concern as well and that’s what makes this issue so difficult. So maybe, you know, it’s probably a good reason to have this study, but studies a lot of time in this state have already been done somewhere else and that’s why I asked if you were aware of any place else where they had anything, so thank you for your testimony.

ROBERT ROSADO: Thank you.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Any other questions or comments? Senator Osten.

SEN. OSTEN (19TH): I apologize for having walked out, but did you talk about the DRE testing at all? I think you were talking about that when I came in.

ROBERT ROSADO: We spoke about it early, so the drug recognition experts within the department or the training for a recognition expert is about $5,000 to $10,000 dollars for each officer that you send to training. That officer is able to do further training to determine if the individual is impaired and under the influence of a drug.

SEN. OSTEN (19TH): So my understanding is the last time training was done for this program was almost a year ago in February was the last time that there were officers that were trained?

LOUIS J FUSARO: Yes, Senator. It’s been quite a while since we’ve hosted in Connecticut. In fact, the officer, the one officer, of my entire staff that’s been trained in that, we actually sent him out of state to conduct that training. We haven’t been able to have it quite often in Connecticut. It is -- It is a costly class. It is a useful class, it’s great, but those DREs around the state are few and far between, we need a lot more of them, and
again, their training is much more sophisticated when it comes to drug recognition and the caricature or the indicators that an individual has if they’re under the influence of a narcotic, but again, that – most of that is done post arrest, so the probable cause needs to be established upfront to make the arrest.

SEN. OSTEN (19TH): My understanding is if there were enough DRE officers that you could also have them out on the road and they could do testing on site?

ROBERT ROSADO: They could do testing on site, but we’re also looking for further testing within the department inside. Once you bring them inside, we’re looking to determine a level of impairment for those individuals that are operating the motor vehicles under the influence, so just like your blood alcohol content for alcohol, it’s 0.08, we’re kind of looking for something similar to determine what the impairment is for that individual under that drug.

SEN. OSTEN (19TH): If a similar bill to fund the DRE program in Appropriations to make sure that we have enough trained officers on both state police and local municipalities, so I’ve talked to someone who has participated in the training of police officers over a number of years, both state and municipality, and he has indicated that this is a program that’s used across the country all over the place and so if say for example, we legalized marijuana, that this test would provide at least a baseline for understanding if someone was under the influence, would you find that to be accurate?
ROBERT ROSADO: That is accurate and most of the training, like Chief Fusaro said, it’s nationally, so it’s across the country, and a lot of time we’re sending officers to other states for training.

SEN. OSTEN (19TH): Because we don’t have a class here, not that we don’t have the ability to have the class here, but we just don’t have the class scheduled here?

ROBERT ROSADO: There’s not enough courses to take and especially within the state.

SEN. OSTEN (19TH): Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Yes, Representative Hayes.

REP. HAYES (51ST): Good afternoon, gentlemen. Has any of the judgment or the results from the specialized officers in court, has it been challenged? Has there been a court case yet where someone has challenged the opinion of any of these certified officers?

ROBERT ROSADO: Not within our department. I’m not sure if anyone else had any.

LOUIS J FUSARO: I’m sorry, I don’t know the answer to that. I’m not sure if there’s been any legal challenges to it in Connecticut.

REP. HAYES (51ST): Okay. So right now, these offs are used post arrest, is that what you said? And how much of an accurate determination do they give you on how high somebody is? Can they tell you to a degree?

LOUIS J FUSARO: They furnish a separate report that has all of the signs, the indicators that they’ve
detected, they put in a separate report. It doesn’t -- I mean, they’re not doing -- the accuracy of that would have to come from some kind of chemical test or if they’re doing blood or urine for narcotics or marijuana or something else, that would be -- that would tell you the exactly level of impairment, just like the standardized field sobriety test. All it tells you is that someone has exhibited the signs that puts them above the legal limit, which is 0.08, so it doesn’t give you an exact amount of how high they are or how intoxicated they are, it just says they’re above that legal -- they’re above the standard where they should be operating a motor vehicle.

REP. HAYES (51ST): Okay. So as chief officials, if we were to legalize marijuana and you were to have numerous officers trained to this level, would you consider that something that you would rely on?

ROBERT ROSADO: It’s certainly helpful to have more officers trained as DRE experts, as we’re also looking for further testing once they get inside the station to determine the level of impairment, how recent did they use marijuana or any other drug.

REP. HAYES (51ST): So in your opinion, a study would be necessary?

ROBERT ROSADO: This study would be necessary, correct.

REP. HAYES (51ST): Thank you.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Anyone else have any questions? Seeing none, thank you very much, gentlemen, for your testimony. I appreciate it. I believe we are with Lieutenant Paul Hussey.
PAUL HUSSEY: Yes, sir. I’m here on behalf of the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association, Bill 5362, increasing the penalties for injuring or killing a police animal or police service dog. Just to introduce myself, I want to thank you for having me here today. I’ve been a police K9 handler of three different canines. I’ve been involved in canines since 2005. I’m a nationally recognized and accredited trainer at the state and national level. I’m also a northeast director for the National Narcotic Detective Dogs Association. To piggyback on what was said earlier, the gentleman from Watertown, the figures that it costs to train, I’ve trained probably 50 or 60 police canines.

My department is fortunate enough to have a trainer, but it did cost them money. I had to do a $400-dollar internship. They don’t meet -- They don’t -- They don’t even meet the actual cost. If you were to go to a private company, the cost of a canine would be about $8,500 dollars. It’s going to cost you another probably $8,000 dollars, we’re talking right around $16,000 dollars. If you were to do it on your own, you’re looking at $14,000 or $15,000 dollars. Injuring is $5,000, I believe, the penalty, and $10,000 and ten years, I believe, for killing a police canine, which doesn’t exceed or even meet the standard. These are dogs that are the front line of our opioid crisis. They find missing and elderly people.

They put themselves in situations where other officers don’t want to go and that’s why they use the canine and certainly someone who is of the mindset to fight or kill a police dog or its handler should receive stiffer penalties because he clearly has no regard for the laws of the state Connecticut
or the police in the state of Connecticut. This bill would also strengthen penalties for dangerous offenders, keep the community safer from violent offenders. The Connecticut Police Chiefs Association supports laws committed to protecting the public, law enforcement, and police canines. Thank you very much.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Any questions? Thank you very much, Lieutenant. It’s appreciated. I’m going to totally mispronounce this name, number 14, Mark Gottesdiener, does that make sense? Please correct me, sir, I apologize.

MARC GOTTESDIENER: Good afternoon, folks. My name is Marc Gottesdiener. I’m here to speak to oppose H.B. 6955, about the ACT ADOPTING THE INTERNATIONAL PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE. I’ve been a member for a number of years of the Connecticut Coalition of Property Owners and I’m a full time real estate professional. I’ve owned many properties. I’m a certified general appraiser for three decades. I’ve been a commercial realtor for over four decades, among other things. I mention in my talk, I don’t think anybody here was part of it, but 35 years ago I saved a building a couple blocks away. It was called the Bond Restaurant, where legislators and politicians used to go for lunch before they built this building, so I lived on a rough street and I got tired of seeing the savage nomad gang tear it apart and so I was a young 28-year-old guy and foolish.

It took me about three years to get a partnership together and fix the building and I mention this because if you pass a law or even consider a law to try to have international codes for Connecticut,
buildings can’t get fixed, people can’t rehabilitate property because there’s going to more and more issues at hand and each town should take care of that themselves. The Connecticut Coalition of Property Owners is one of Connecticut’s largest landlord property owner organizations. We have chapters in Enfield, Wyndham, Hartford, West Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport, and Stamford, as well as the Connecticut Association of Real Estate Investors right here in Hartford. Our members own thousands of rental units throughout Connecticut consisting of mostly small and medium size landlords and we depend upon equity and fairness to conduct business.

The question is why worry about international codes when right here now in Connecticut we have 169 fiefdoms and each town and each building department is required to conform to the Connecticut State Building Codes. Why complicate everyone’s life further? And worse, it still wants to charge user fees for further making and doing business and renovations more expensive and causing more delays to get anything done. Why even consider this idea? Connecticut already has plenty of building code laws and regulations, don’t we? And there is a Connecticut state office in Middletown when you have an issue with a particular official that you can appeal to that office, so why create more stuff because it’s harder and harder to own real estate and to manage real estate and deal with real estate if you have these different layers.

If you want to lessen the burdens of property owners, landlords, builders, contractors, then maybe the state should make a county government to oversee such building codes, but then again CCOPO -- and
we’re not here to talk about anything about forming a county because we’re still 169 fiefdoms, so in general, less is better and please ask questions of what it takes to try to operate housing and manage real estate business, much less the restrictions already imposed upon each of the 169 towns or cities that have on their books because it’s not easy to do business in this state, as you know.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Thank you, sir.

MARC GOTTESDIENER: And dealing with tenants and, of course, we always have Murphy’s Law. I appreciate it. Please ask me why anyone on this committee should even consider this bill.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Thank you, sir. I just want to say that little noise means the time that is allotted is up, sir. I’m sure there might be people who have some questions. Representative Camillo, you seem eager to ask some questions? No? Okay. Anyone have any questions? No? Thank you. Thank you, sir, for your testimony. We appreciate it.

MARC GOTTESDIENER: Well, I hope you just forget this bill. Thank you

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Thank you. Michael Muszynski.

MICHAEL MUSZYNSKI: Good afternoon, Chairman Bradley, Chairman Verrengia, members of the Public Safety Committee. My name is Mike Muszynski with the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities. We are Connecticut’s statewide association of towns and cities, currently representing 169 municipalities throughout Connecticut. We have submitted testimony on a number of bills that are on today’s agenda, but I want to focus my remarks on just a couple of them. First of them, House Bill 6955, the previous speaker
had mentioned this in regards to the International Property Maintenance Code. CCM has consistently been opposed to this proposal as it would negatively impact municipality budgets and strain municipality administrative resources. Our objection is premised on a one size fits all approach to this issue. It doesn’t work for our towns and cities. Individual municipalities are in the best position to develop guidelines that will work for their communities. In fact, if this were to be adopted, some communities might actually have to relax some of their current standards.

The International Code would be a significant funding requirement that would require necessary staffing and training and therefore would impose another unfunded mandate on our already burdened towns and cities. I know Ms. Dicine from the State’s Attorney’s Office spoke earlier today in regards to her support of this proposal. We have met with her on this issue. She had mentioned a working group that was ongoing to discuss this. We have not been included in that, unfortunately, but it is something that we would continue to do and look at if the intent to promote healthier homes and combat blight, there are a number of other suggestions that we’d be happy to work on instead.

Another bill that I’ll focus on is House Bill 6155 regarding the consolidation of PSAP. We support efforts to regionalize and local officials equally require the option to determine how best to manage their municipalities, so any effort to consolidate should be done on a voluntary level rather than forced regionalization. We support this study to examine Connecticut’s PSAP capability, especially in light of two major issues that have occurred since
the last PSAP study, mainly known as the Kimball report, the first being the implementation of the NextGen radio system, which allows for greater interoperability, and then the second which is a new ability for towns to be part of the state radio system. We believe a thorough review of those two components, along with better guidance on the use of secondary or supplemental dispatch systems would help in the ongoing discussion regarding consolidation of PSAP.

And then the one last bill that I’ll mention is Senate Bill 789 regarding the reimbursement to law enforcement units for training costs. This is an important issue. It just provides some clarity to a bill that was enacted in 2015 that CCM was a principle advocate in. We do believe that it provides clarity again, but it also continues to satisfy the professional mobility of a police officer, but also protect the investments made by the municipalities that finance their certification. And with that, I’ll end my remarks and be happy to entertain any questions.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Thank you very much, sir. Is there any questions? Seeing none, thank you very much for your testimony today. Next is Amy McLean.

AMY MCLEAN: Good afternoon, Honorable Chairpersons Bradley and Verrengia, Ranking Members Hwang and Sredzinski, and committee members. My name is Amy McLean-Salls. I work at the Acadia Center. Acadia Center appreciates this opportunity to provide written testimony to the Public Safety and Security Committee regarding the bill referenced S.B. 771. The Acadia Center is a nonprofit research and advocacy organization committed to advancing the
clean energy future. Acadia Center is at the forefront of the efforts to build clean, low-carbon, and consumer friendly economies. As I mentioned, we are in support of Bill 771. We support the adoption of building codes that facilitate the deployment of electric vehicles, or also known as EVs, by reducing the cost of EV charger installation. EVs are a critical component of the state’s greenhouse gas emissions reduction strategy as they cut emissions 75 percent compared to the conventional vehicle and emit no tailpipe nitrogen oxide pollution. Transportation is the largest source of Connecticut’s GHG emissions, which must be reduced for the state to reach its climate goals. Transportation is also the primary cause of nitrogen oxide pollution in Connecticut, emitting about 67 of this local air pollutant. Nitrogen oxide leads to ground level ozone and smog, which can trigger asthma attacks among other public health harms.

EVs also provide a significant consumer savings, costing about $1.30 less to drive per gallon equivalent than conventional vehicles. Recognizing the many environmental and economic benefits of EVs, Connecticut committed with other states in the northeast to put 1.7 million zero emission vehicles, including EVs, on the road by 2025, about 155,000 of which will need to be registered in Connecticut. Given that less than 10,000 EVs have been registered in the state since 2011, a significant sales increase will be needed to reach the final goal. Facilitating the deployment of EVs charging equipment through EV ready building codes will help accelerate consumer adoption of EVs and is a critical piece to our clean energy — out state’s clean energy future.
Studies have shown that EV drives charge where they park with over 90 percent of EV charging taking place at home and at workplaces with the remaining 10 percent at a variety of commercial locations, thus the ability to install a charger in residential and commercial locations without major electrical retrofits provides a common sense boost to the EV market that will help our state reach its EV and climate goals. EV-ready building codes ensure that new construction is capable of supporting EV charging by requiring significant electrical infrastructure to be built into garages and parking areas at the time of construction.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Excuse me, Ma’am. I’m sorry, I’m just going to ask you to do summation as it’s the end of the time.

AMY McLEAN: I’m pretty much done. Thank you. I’ll leave it there. You have my testimony and I appreciate the opportunity to have spoken here today.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): All right. Any questions from this committee? Seeing none, thank you very much for your time, Ma’am.

AMY McLEAN: Thank you.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): I believe Representative Art House is here, if I’m not mistaken? And if there are other representatives or senators here, if you could just check in with someone from staff so we can know that you’re here. Thank you.

ART HOUSE: Chairs and vice-chairs, co-chairs, ranking members, thank you for the promotion. I’m not a state representative, but would love to have that honor. I am Connecticut’s chief cybersecurity
risk officer and I’m here to discuss Senate Bill 709. I do a lot of speaking around Connecticut and internationally on the question of cybersecurity and I’m often asked are we safe and the answer is of course not, we are not safe at all. We’re very vulnerable, as are people in all states. I will try to just summarize my testimony and hope you may have some questions. I have two simple points; one is that we’re completely dependent on the digital world. That makes our modern life potentially devastating to compromise, secondly, we need to defend ourselves, and third, the states are critical players in this. Sometimes we think that the federal government may help out. The federal government is not there to help. Think of it like a hurricane or an ice storm, if it happens, we would not call Washington and say can you clear the roads, can you take care of it, those are our first responders. The responsibility both for prevention and for recovery lies right here in Connecticut.

Just a few days ago, the director of national intelligence, Dan Coats, reminded us that Russia is planting malware in our electricity grid, China is positioned to execute cyberattacks on our critical infrastructure, the most vital parts of our national government, intelligence, the military, the Whitehouse itself, our banks, insurance companies.

Right here in Connecticut, of interest to us, is the plans for the Black Hawk helicopter, the F35 joint strike fighter, and the Aegis ship missile system have all been stolen by the Chinese. I’m just trying to make the point that we are vulnerable and we are compromised and we are probed all the time. As one Connecticut official pointed out recently, his company was probed one million distinct times in
one 24-hour period. This is not is it happening, will it happen, it’s happening all the time, not just hourly. You can’t take an hour off in your defense, you don’t have that to spend.

In the state of Connecticut, there are about 5 billion connection attempts to the state government, machines in Connecticut, every month. Two billion of those are rejected because they don’t meet protocol, so the state is under attack, as well. Half of all businesses in Connecticut, one half of them, have never done a risk assessment of any kind, never mind for cybersecurity. Now this Bill 709 is very important. It raises the question statewide, how do we counterattack, what do we do. We have in plan right now, we are the only state in the nation that I know that examines how we’re doing in our utilities, but how about the rest of the state? We have a strategy, we have an action plan, but we don’t have a management structure. Should it be centralized or decentralized, dotted line or straight line? The two circumstances that I know that I worked on personally; in Washington DC, I was chief of staff to Senator Ribicoff and we decided to take all the parts of energy that were throughout the federal government and create a department of energy. Everyone had an agency that had a partner agency that had something to do with energy.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): If you could just give us a summation, we’d appreciate it.

ART HOUSE: Yes, sir. It was centralized. A decentralized solution was the director of national intelligence where I served for several years, kept everything in place, but had a coordinator on top of it. I think that 709 is very valuable and that it
raises the question of what should our management capacity be, should it be centralized or decentralized, and what should its priorities be and I’d be happy to take any questions you may have.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Thank you very much, sir. I think Senator Hwang had a few questions.

SEN. HWANG (28TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and Mr. House. I think you are quite humble in regards to your level of expertise and I’m not sure when we made you a state rep, we gave you a promotion. Could you clarify what your current title is within the department of administrative services and that was a designation and the title given by Governor Malloy?

ART HOUSE: Yes, sir. I am the chief cybersecurity risk officer for the state of Connecticut. I had served four years as chairman of PURA, Public Utilities Regulatory Authority, and there we created both a strategy and an action plan which is currently in place and because that was interesting and got launched, the governor asked if I would leave PURA and create a strategy and action plan for the state of Connecticut in its entirety and it has five points, the state government, municipal government, private business, law enforcement, and higher education, so that’s my current job.

SEN. HWANG (28TH): Thank you and in fact, when reading through your study that you finished up at the bequest of Governor Malloy, I was able to kind of pull those priorities, but in addition to service in PURA and understanding our grid protection, but even before then, you have been at the highest level of intelligence service. Could you kind of elaborate a little bit? To set up a foundation for
us to kind of really value the work that you’re offering on this area.

ART HOUSE: Well, thank you, sir. Let’s see, I had three or four different federal jobs which involved top secret and other compartmentalized clearances, the existence of which are classified. I was on the National Security Council staff as a Whitehouse fellow under President Ford. I was chief of staff to Senator Ribicoff and also chief of staff to the Senate majority leader, Robert Byrd, and I participated in the strategic arms limitation negotiations with the Soviet Union. I was the chief of staff for that process in the Senate. Then subsequently, I joined the intelligence community under President Obama and I was head of congressional relations and communications for the director of national intelligence and then I also spent some time working for one of the spy agencies called the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency, it’s the agency that takes the pictures. Those are -- Just a few other things, but those are the highlights, sir.

SEN. HWANG (28TH): The highlight reinforces that we should heed the thoughts and comments you offer very importantly and thank you for sharing your expertise. Now, you mentioned something that’s very interesting. The federal government, very much like DEMA, does not have a centralized cybersecurity agency. That seems remarkable to me. Why is that and I think you cited Senator Coats or the security officer for our federal government, Mr. Coats, Dan Coats, and some of his alarming words, as well.

ART HOUSE: Yes, sir, Senator. Let’s put it this way, the federal government and the state are coping
with a new and very powerful threat. When they realized how powerful it is and that anyone can be compromised, literally anyone, they then decide what are we going to do. Now, the locus of dealing with that challenge used to be at the national security agency. That is where -- That’s where we defend against cyberattacks and where we also have an offensive capability. That unit was set up, let’s see, in 2010, I was there at the ceremony, we created that entity. But post 9/11, we have wanted to protect the homeland of the United States, so many of the responsibilities for protecting the United States were shifted over to the department of homeland security.

Now, there is a department within homeland security where somebody looks after these agencies, but in the last few years, the leadership really came from the Whitehouse. There were two senior officers. Under the current administration, both of those offices have been done away with, so there is -- who in the executive branch is in charge of this and that’s a question that can be debated. Moreover, within Congress, there has been no serious cybersecurity legislation passed by Congress to resolve the very question that you pose and it’s one that needs to be -- needs to be presented and needs to be resolved.

SEN. HWANG (28TH): Why do you think that? It seems that the issue of cybersecurity and the incidents of encroachment, as well as violations, occur almost daily in the news. Why has it not been addressed on a federal level?

ART HOUSE: Addressed but not resolved, Senator, I would say. I know one of the current -- There was
an article recently that pointed out that the department of homeland security, the chair right now, is very concerned about excessive regulation and finds that some of the provisions that would centralize and would govern this might involve additional regulations. I can’t answer that question. How we approach this I think gets to the core of what you’re asking, do we have a department of cybersecurity which has responsibility in -- over this in every agency or do we do the similar thing to the director of national intelligence where there is somebody who has prime authority over cybersecurity in every agency and I think as a federal solution, that would make sense because cybersecurity affects every single agency in the United States government every department. It would not make sense to run those functions centrally, but the quality control, the making sure they’re well trained, that people can transfer from one agency to another, that there are means to get them necessary security clearance, to tap the outside private sector to do all that, that could be tremendously enhanced recognized locus of authority at the federal level, sir.

SEN. HWANG (28TH): Thank you, and given the lack of action or coordinated effort in the federal level, what you have demonstrated by this report that you put through, but also the recognition nationally that what we did in Connecticut was truly innovative in evaluating our internal cybersecurity. Where do you see the state itself being able to take that leadership?

ART HOUSE: Thank you, sir. Well, first of all, I was in Europe recently and one of the presenters was a cybersecurity firm who referred to the Connecticut
model and I was pleased to hear that and went up afterwards and asked him what he meant and he said, you’re the collaboration state and indeed, we are, and that gets back to that plan that we set up at PURA. We did not have a formal docket mandating what Connecticut’s utilities should do in cybersecurity. Rather, we had technical meetings and we negotiated with utilities themselves. They agreed. So we’d have annual meetings, review with four Connecticut officials, it would be private and classified, remain secret. They would use a standard of their own choosing.

They all chose the cybersecurity capabilities maturity model and the final report would be subject to veto by utility. Now it’s worked. We’ve had two of them. We’ve had a lot of national attention for that. We’ve had two reports, they’re on-line, they indicate where our strengths are and what’s being done to improve our cybersecurity defense capabilities. Now that’s the -- that is for the public utilities. Because of that, the state department has certain countries that they want to help strengthen their cybersecurity capacity and they have asked me to -- Well, I’ve been doing work for the past three years in the Black Sea region with Ukraine and two other countries, three other countries, in the Balkans with the Balkan countries, and also with some Baltic countries. That’s maybe four or five trips I’ve made with some other national experts to show that when you cooperate, you can put together both a strategy and an action plan so that the Connecticut model, although it’s not that well known in Connecticut, does have some federal and international recognition of a systemic voluntary collaborative process by which we can make
progress in public utilities. The rest of the state is up grabs here. Now we have not decided how to deal with those other five things, the five areas that are in our state strategy and action plan.

SEN. HWANG (28TH): Well, that’s -- that’s a lot of work to be done; 709 represents kind of a centralized perspective in this, but as we have seen in state government, our IT structures are so decentralized amongst various agencies and departments. Could there be a model where there are two different ways of going about it, a centralized option and maybe a decentralized option, the collaborative option that you just cited earlier?

ART HOUSE: Senator, I think we need one or the other urgently and that’s one of the great values of this proposed legislation. We need to do one or the other. Right now, cybersecurity is a -- and how to deal with cybersecurity is a decision made by every individual commissioner. He or she decides whether to have a cybersecurity program or not and what to do about it, so there are parts of state government which are in very good shape, but there are parts of state government which are completely vulnerable and have almost no defense whatsoever. That’s unacceptable in the year 2019 when the vulnerability is so high. I personally, my own personal preference, would be to have be a decentralized form. For example, if all this were in DESPP, one proposal, what do you do about the business community and what role would DESPP have because as I mentioned, half of all businesses in Connecticut have never ever done a risk assessment and they know they’re vulnerable and the trade association CBIN already know they’re vulnerable, should you run that in a centralized fashion out of DESPP?
It could be a bit awkward and I don’t know where it should be housed. I’ve heard OPM, I’ve heard the department of administrative services, governor’s office, wherever it is, I think it would be better to have a quality control priority setting prod to enforce good behavior and best practices because cybersecurity has to be practiced in every corner of every agency in Connecticut. That’s my own personal preference. I want to say that I don’t think there is one solution or the other and I salute you for raising this bill because now we’re having that debate because the bill is before you.

SEN. HWANG (28TH): Well, I think that there’s much to be done about this, but I was hoping to increase the awareness of is the sense of urgency. I think — I think we should wake up fully alarmed that we are under attack every day in every possible way, either through the homeland security aspect, through our corporate espionage, even through this phone that we have. We under attack. Would that statement be fair?

ART HOUSE: Not that it’s fair, it’s completely accurate, Senator.

SEN. HWANG (28TH): So I want to thank you and I don’t want to take up any more time, but I also want to take a moment to thank Governor Lamont’s administration and his staff understanding of the urgency of this and I’m very anxious and look forward to working with you and the administration in ensuring that our state is protected on the cybersecurity front. Thank you so, so much for your time.

ART HOUSE: Thank you very much, Senator.
SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Any other questions? Yes, Representative Vail.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good afternoon.

ART HOUSE: Good afternoon, sir.

REP. VAIL (52ND): And would this new division within DESPP, do you know how many people that would be required to be hired?

ART HOUSE: I don’t.

REP. VAIL (52ND): It is a proposal.

ART HOUSE: Right now, DESPP has I would say three major functions that involves cyber. First of all, the intelligence function has been upgraded. There’s a fusion center called the acronym CTIC. Every state has one. It has moved from terrorism, from gangs, drugs, and now also looks at cyber threats. Most of the activity is at the top secret level. I’ve been down there, I have that clearance, I’ve seen the work they do. It’s a step forward. Now to harvest that intelligence, to know what is going on in Connecticut, then it needs to go to some enforcement agency. A few years ago, the state police stood up such an operation, there’s criminal investigation, and they’re starting to add officers to it. I think that’s also a step on the right direction.

They need to work with the municipalities. Representative, let me just to draw an example for you, if a Connecticut citizen is at home or at business and sees someone trying to break into that home computer or that business in order to steal intellectual property or money, who do you call?
Well, if somebody is at the back door at your house with a crowbar, you know who to call right away and you will get a prompt response, but what do you do if somebody’s trying to steal your identity, your intellectual property, or your money, who do you call?

We’re creating that capacity within the Connecticut State Police and they’re working with the municipalities in order to have some way of investigating and responding to that crime.

REP. VAIL (52ND): And I understand that. I certainly recognize the problem. Also I like the collaborative idea of, you know, sharing that information with the different agencies, but, I mean, is this something that can be done with the manpower we have now that this can be created?

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): I think it needs to be augmented. The third one is emergency management, I just -- we’re focused on hurricanes, ice storms, and floods. We ought to be pretty good at it now. This has been going on ever since the earth cooled and we will continue to have those threats, but the new threat, the one that really worries people, is a cyberattack, that we’re cut off the flow of natural gas coming out of Philadelphia going to New York. Fifty percent of all electricity in New England right now is generated by natural gas. How would we respond to the loss of half of our electricity for over a prolonged period of time? Now those are the three functions within DESPP. Does it make sense to have somebody control the cyber intelligence, cyber investigations, and cyber management. Right now, there are command and control systems under the state police, under CTIC, and under emergency
management. I think we can get it done well if we had a senior cyber officer who could work, reinforce that work, and had a dotted line relationship to support them in what they’re doing.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Couldn’t be somebody who already works within the department instead of creating a whole new agency? Here’s my concern, I’m always reticent to grow state government.

ART HOUSE: Of course it could, yes, sir, of course. The question is there aren’t -- Put it this way, the cybersecurity challenge has grown faster than the qualified people who are working in the area. There is a shortage at all levels. It’s just simply entry level cybersecurity warriors. There are 4,000 jobs lacking in Connecticut right now. These are the people that go to work for a company to help you fix your computer and stay safe. At the senior policy level, there aren’t that many of us. I am not a cybersecurity expert. What I like to say, in the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king, I mean, at least I’ve worked on this tangentially at the federal level, but I do not tout myself as a cybersecurity expert. The answer to your question is yes, it could be done with the right person, absolutely.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Thank you, I appreciate it.

ART HOUSE: Sure.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Any further questions? Seeing none, thank you very much for your testimony.

ART HOUSE: Thank you very much, Senator.
SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): I believe we have Representative Lavielle who’s present here. The floor is yours, Ma’am.

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): Good afternoon. It has been a very long day of hearings. Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify in favor of House Bill 5152. This is -- I think you’ve heard from some people already about the act concerning a way to determine how to detect when a driver is under the influence of marijuana. A few general points about the bill that I want to make, first off, this bill neither supports nor opposes legalization of marijuana. That has nothing to do with it. This is a public safety bill and it addresses the issues related to use, whether it’s legal or illegal, of marijuana in situations where individuals might be in a position to pose a risk to others. The word study in the bill’s title, it’s not really the word I would have chosen, it came back that way, but it’s not meant to suggest that the state should be doing its own research scientifically on all of the intricacies of blood levels and technology for detection and that sort of thing.

Rather, the intent is for the bill to require a comprehensive review of the abilities available and a thorough recommendation for policy evolution in this area over the short and long-term. And finally, the bill is not meant to suggest that Connecticut’s law enforcement professionals are not doing the best job they possibly can with the resources they have; on the contrary. Rather, the bill’s objective is to ensure that state policy is clear enough and forward-looking enough to ensure that all new developments in this field are fully explored and that law enforcement, the courts, the
public are fully prepared for a changing and unpredictable environment around marijuana and it does involve implementing policies and ample opportunities to coordinate their work.

At this point, and by the way, I’m sorry, I don’t think I identified myself for the record. I just realized that. I’m Representative Gail Lavielle from the 143rd District. I have included some background information here, but I don’t want to be duplicative if you’ve already heard from some people about the problems of detecting whether someone has used marijuana and whether it’s causing impairment. I know I’m not supposed to ask you questions, but have you heard some about that already because I won’t go into it if you have.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): We have heard testimony in regards to that, Ma’am, but I’m not sure if there’s anything new you’d like to offer. The floor is and I guess, Representative, as you know, you can use your time as you wish.

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): Okay. Well, I think you’re probably aware that blood levels are not particularly helpful because you could have used marijuana a month ago and you’d still have high blood levels. It’s difficult to correlate impairment with what the drug recognition experts can identify. They can tell you’re impaired, but you can’t actually prove it’s because of marijuana or some other drug and it’s sometimes difficult for those things to hold up in court, so we have some tools, but they are imperfect and we don’t have everything that we need to prove impairment, link it to a standardized measure of a substance in the body and then go forward to actually say that someone can
be charged in a way that holds up with the marijuana DUI.

This is important, I believe, as an issue whether Connecticut legalizes marijuana or not. It’s just that the context of there being a high interest of it in the state right now and neighboring states that have legalized the recreational use add more urgency to the situation and I think make it necessary that we’re as advanced as we can be in the matter and that all of the parties involved professionally in this are coordinating with each other and paying attention so that we can make good policy and give them the resources they need. There are new tools being worked on and there will be -- apparently some companies will be launching pilots shortly.

I will go down to the bottom. You will have my written testimony. It may be in the system already. The bill’s intent is basically to ensure that DESPP, the police chiefs, the judicial system, specialized attorneys, public health professionals, scientists and others have the resources they need to resolve the current issues I scanned for you, as well as the assurance that doing so is a priority for state government. This may mean creating a permanent working group, advocating modest financial resources, or assigning particular tasks. It’s important to hear from the professionals to know what they need most. I hope the introduction and hearing of this bill will open an active and ongoing discussion -- I am wrapping up -- and lead to concrete steps that will continue to meet the needs of public safety in this changing environment of marijuana laws and usage. I thank you for your attention. I would happy to participate in any
follow-up discussions, provide references to a lot of available sources for information, continue pursuing research, and discussing what depth, what form, and what ongoing working group or other type of an entity could take. I respectfully ask that you consider taking this initiative farther through legislation in order to ensure proactive focus on this important issue. Thank you very much.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Thank you, Representative. Any questions? Representative Camillo.

REP. CAMILLO (151ST): Thank you, Mr. Chair, just one quick question to the good representative. You may have said this and I didn’t catch it. In the states that have legalized marijuana, did they -- had they done a pre-study, you know, before they legalized it?

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): Well, what I -- I don’t know about the states in detail, but I do know that Colorado and a couple of others have said that they wished that they had gone into this particular matter in more depth before they had actually pushed the button on legalization because they are -- a lot of those states have what they call per se blood level limits that if you reach that level, you’re automatically charged and in fact, you may be wrongfully charged or someone who actually is impaired, but doesn’t have that level in their blood because they just smoked or ingested it a couple of hours ago and they’re very large and it didn’t seem to affect them very much, although in reality it has, they can make a lot of mistakes. It can also be, you know, time-consuming, they have a lot of other proofs to go through. So the feeling out there generally in all the material that I’ve read,
which I’ll be happy to share the references for, is that more studies should have been done first. Thank you.

REP. CAMILLO (151ST): Thank you for that answer.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Thank you very much, Representative. Any other questions? Seeing none, we appreciate your testimony today, Representative.

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Greg Allord is next. Michael Dapkus.

MICHAEL DAPKUS: Good afternoon, members of the Public Safety Committee. My name is Michael Dapkus and I am the president of Dapkus Fireworks Incorporated in Durham, Connecticut. I also am vice-president of Stateline Fireworks in Winchester, New Hampshire. My past jobs also, I’m a retired paramedic and I’m a retired police officer for the town of Portland, retired about 13 years ago. My main focus today is on Senate Bill 664, which I support, but with amendments. I believe you have my handout in front of you and if you don’t, I could also provide one for you, but with that handout is a safety brochure that our company in Connecticut is the only fireworks company in Connecticut that passes out a safety brochure.

The state of New Hampshire, again I own Stateline Fireworks, Senator Witkos probably mentioned a dealer out of New Hampshire or a fireworks dealer out of New Hampshire that 40 percent of the customers come there and that’s us. On average, we have close to 12,000 customers a year; 40 percent of that are Connecticut residents. There’s 28 firework
stores in New Hampshire, so if you do the math, there’s thousands of Connecticut residents just coming to New Hampshire alone to buy consumer fireworks and that’s just New Hampshire. They also flock closer to Pennsylvania and some also take the trip up to Maine.

The reason why they’re doing this is back in 2000, we passed our sparkler bill, which allows most Connecticut residents are all over the age of 16 to use hand-held sparklers and fountains. The majority of the customers that come to our store, in Connecticut we only had 812 last year compared to our 10,000 or 12,000 in New Hampshire, but only -- out of the 812 of them, the majority of them asked for aerials, we want something that goes up into the air and shoots colors. That’s banned in Connecticut presently. Senator Witkos’ bill will change that and I’m just going to be brief here and pretty frank.

Is Connecticut ready for this bill, though, and I was in law enforcement and it was a lot easier to just ban it and I don’t have to deal with it. Well, New Hampshire, Maine, Pennsylvania and 23 other states didn’t do that. They sat down with the fire services -- and I agree, people are going to get hurt with fireworks, they get hurt with chainsaws, they get hurt with gas grills, and I can empathize with the public safety officials because I was one myself, but what I learned in New Hampshire was that their approach was to work with the firework companies. Public service didn’t particularly care for it, but we worked it out. It took years to do and there was some mistakes and they were corrected.
And I think Connecticut can do that too because consumer fireworks are here. Most Connecticut residents that come up to our store in New Hampshire, it’s like they were legal in Connecticut.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Thank you, sir.

MICHAEL DAPKUS: I’ll reserve for any questions.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Any questions from members of the committee? Seeing none, thank you very much for your testimony today, it’s appreciated. Sergio Ligori, he left. Michael Kronick, he also left. Rachel Holmes, no. Dynowski.

SAMANTHA DYNOWSKI: Good afternoon, Senator Bradley, and esteemed members of the committee. My name is Samantha Dynowski. I’m the state director for Sierra Club Connecticut and I thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of Senate Bill 771, AN ACT ADDING REQUIREMENTS FOR ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING PARKING SPACES TO THE STATE BUILDING CODE. In order to meet Connecticut’s greenhouse reduction mandates, emissions from the transportation sector must be addressed. This sector is responsible for more than 35 percent of carbon emissions. Electric vehicles are key to addressing this. Amending the state building code is recommended as an important strategy to accelerate the adoption of electric vehicles. I hope proponents of this bill can work with you to address the concerns you’ve expressed and to meet the needs we project for electric vehicle charging. Thank you.

MERRIL GAY: Good afternoon, Senator Bradley, Representative Verrengia who just left. My name is Merril Gay. I am the executive director of the Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance and I am here to speak in support of S.B. 533, which would amend the general statutes to require that newly constructed or substantially renovated buildings with public restrooms contain not less than one diaper changing table in both the men’s and women’s restrooms on every floor of a public building.

Since -- Well, as somebody who’s changed my fair share of diapers with two kids, I believe this bill addresses a serious issue facing parents and caregivers of young children. The lack of diaper changing tables available to parents, especially to dads and male caregivers, force many of us to deal with makeshift changing setups which are often less hygienic and safe for babies, in addition to being a serious inconvenience to parents.

Since 2016, diaper changing tables are required in all federal buildings, courthouses, post offices, etc., and this problem is widespread enough that a Florida father, Dante Palmer, has gained national attention as he posted his typical diaper changing routine, squatting on the floor and trying to change the diaper of his squirming child on this lap because there is no diaper changing table in the restroom. This has gotten 7,000 likes on Instagram and lots of other parents posting their pictures. This is a relatively inexpensive thing. I did a quick Google search and you can get changing tables for $150 bucks retail. I’m sure if somebody was buying a whole building’s worth, you can get it for less. It is now the law in New York City and I urge
you to make it the law here in Connecticut. Thank you for your time.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Thank you. It’s a great testimony. Questions? No? We’re going to have Senator Haskell, followed by Chief Cain or Rachel Cain.

SEN. HASKELL (26TH): Good afternoon, Mr. Chair. Thank you so much for having me here to testify today. I am thrilled to be speaking before the Public Safety Committee. I am testifying in support of legislation that would require newly built buildings or buildings that are being substantively renovated to include diaper changing tables, at least one, in both men and women’s rooms. According to a piece, the percentage of parenting responsibilities that men have taken on since 1965 has increased three-fold and I think that’s only been -- that number, that multiplier, is only bound to increase as parenting because a lot more equitable in the 21st Century. I certainly hope that men and women will begin to share responsibilities equally and I’m here today really with the interest of all young children in Connecticut, mine and all parents, but especially thinking about my niece, who is the daughter of my brother and his husband, and in speaking with them, I hear very frequently that they’re out in public and they don’t have a place to change her because typically, and this is something that many don’t notice, but I’ve certainly started to notice in the seven months that Mimi has been alive, that would be my niece, that those changing tables are only available in women’s rooms.
I think that Connecticut has to step up to the plate and follow the lead of our federal government. You know, in 2016, President Barack Obama signed the Babies Act, which required at least one changing room in both male and female restrooms in all publically accessible federal buildings. Connecticut, I think, needs to follow our federal government’s lead and this is an important area of progress. As minute as it may seem, it can be a crushing reality for a parent who is out in public, at least my brother tells me. So thank you very much for considering this legislation and I hope that you will recognize the importance of a bill like this.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Thank you, Senator. Any questions? Thank you very much, Senator.

SEN. HASKELL (26TH): Thank you.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Rachel Cain. Chief Cain, I think you have to hit your microphone button. Thank you very much.

RACHEL CAIN: Can you hear me now? Okay. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak before this matter. My name is Rachel Cain. I’m the assistant chief of police for the New Haven Police Department and I’ve been with the department for 21 years and I’m here to support the Bill 789. Ten years ago, our department was able to project future deployment plans and the staffing needs based on the retirement needs of our members. Within the past six years, a fairly new phenomenon has occurred. Large numbers of young officers, officers with less than five years with the department, have been resigning to join other Connecticut law enforcement agencies.
This new phenomenon has put communities like New Haven, communities that host satellite agencies -- academies in a position of financial burden. Our communities are being the -- are bearing the cost of training officers for smaller suburban departments. We understand officers must make career decisions that are best for them and their families. We are not trying to penalize officers for their decisions, however, we do not believe our citizens should shoulder this burden. In 2017, the New Haven Police Department spent approximately $950,000 dollars to seat one academy class of 30 recruits. That’s $31,600 dollar per recruit. These expenses all need to be reimbursable under Special Act 15-5. Although Special Act 15-5 is a step in the right direction, it does not adequately address the financial and personnel issues association with the growing attrition rate of young officers.

In 2015, our department has lost 25 officers to other Connecticut law enforcement agencies. Each of these officers had served less than five years with our department. Recently, one of these officers resigned his position at day 273, that’s just two days past the required date of commitment. The situation causes a significant rippling effect through our department. This growing attrition rate has required our department to seat a full class at least once a year. In addition to the cost of the training, we have been forced to pull officers off beats, excuse me, and reassign them to permanent positions within the academy and the background units. To compensate for the lost staffing on the street, we hire these officers on overtime.

In addition to the financial implications this causes, it decreases our ability to provide the
services and community programs we have prided ourselves on for decades. We believe by extending the reimbursement period from two years to five, it will decrease the financial burden of our revolving hiring process caused by the decreased retainment and allow us to play and allocate our resources more effectively. I’m happy to answer any questions you may have.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Thank you, Chief. Any questions? Yes.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Good afternoon.

RACHEL CAIN: Good afternoon.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Were you able to identify a single, if not more, reasons why people are leaving, why officers are leaving to go to other communities?

RACHEL CAIN: Sure. I think there are several factors in that. I believe in, you know, 2011, we had one officers leave to another agency that had less than five years on and in 2018, we had 13. Over the past few years, we here in New Haven have been without a contract and we are also one of the lowest paying agencies in our area. For instance, an officer could go from New Haven to Hamden and get a $20,000 dollar raise pretty much overnight, so those are certainly contributing factors to this.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): And I know how, especially our major cities, are struggling financially, but that seems to be the issue on the other side of the coin, if you will, as far as the pay rate, the benefits, the attractiveness of the job and I certainly understand collective bargaining and the challenges that you face. Just another question, when you talked about pulling, I’m assuming in New
Haven, officers off the street to go into the academy, you had said that you host other communities for the academy, other towns are coming into to POST.

RACHEL CAIN: We are a POST certified satellite academy, so we typically, when we put on an academy class, the bulk of the officers or the recruits are from New Haven, however, we do have a certain number of seats for local police departments, other police departments.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Right. In lieu of taking the officers off the streets and removing them from some of those valuable programs that you had mentioned, do you use any other resources from those host community, from -- because I’m familiar with around here, the hosts -- Hartford has their own academy, for example, and just like I’m sure New Haven, they send area departments to Hartford, but also those departments send trainers to assist to kind of try to offset that issue you describe. Does that happen in New Haven?

RACHEL CAIN: It does. We have a good relationship with I believe -- actually Trumbull Police Department will send one of their officers down for a ten-week training course as an instructor, however, the day-to-day operations requires us to take a number of officers off of the street just to manage the general operations of the academy.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Okay, thank you.

RACHEL CAIN: You’re welcome.

SEN. BRADLEY (23RD): Any other questions? Yes, Representative Dauphinais.
REP. DAUPHINAIS (44TH): Good afternoon -- Oh, go ahead.

REP. HAYES (51ST): It’s my understanding that you’d like to see this raised from three years to five years?

RACHEL CAIN: It’s currently two years, two years after the date of certification and I’d like to see it raised or extended to five and I personally would even be open to having some type of schedule, so for instance, if you were taken or left within a year of your certification date, the receiving agency just, you know, throwing out numbers, might have to pay 70 percent of the training cost and as the years go on, maybe decrease that number down to at year five 40 percent, so it would be kind of like a scale. The quicker you take our officers, the more you’re going to have to spend because obviously, we spent a lot of money to put them in the academy, whether it’s the training, the salaries, or even the background and even if you want to go further to the civil service test itself. Some of those things aren’t even incorporated in that $950,000 dollars that I gave you. So I would be open to extending it five years and even going on a scale.

REP. HAYES (51ST): Okay. I guess the point I was getting to is during the course of a five-year career with your department, not only is it possible, but it’s likely that that officer would attend maybe some specialized training in the course of that five years, maybe a canine handler, are you looking to recoup only the academy costs or are you looking to recoup any course for training during the five-year period?
RACHEL CAIN: No, I believe it would stay as is, where they outline particular things that we could recuperate, salaries, training, equipment, and it would be for the certification, the cost of the certification, not the -- any training that is after that.

REP. HAYES (51ST): Okay, thank you.

RACHEL CAIN: You’re welcome.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Representative Dauphinais.

REP. DAUPHINAIS (44TH): I think my questions were answered. Thank you.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Okay. Any other questions? Seeing none, thank you.

RACHEL CAIN: Thank you very much for your time.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Okay. I don’t see Representative O’Neill and I don’t see Representative Gresko. That takes care of that list. It looks like Amy Parmenter.

AMY PARMENTER: Good afternoon, Chairmen, Vice-Chairs, Ranking Members of the Public Safety and Security Committee. My name is Amy Parmenter. I am with the AAA Allied group, but today I am testifying on behalf of both AAA clubs in Connecticut, AAA Allied and AAA Northeast. Together we represent more than a million members in Connecticut, but my testimony is also on behalf of all drivers across the state and everyone with whom they share the road. I’m here in support of H.B. 5152. I want to change things up a little and start with the fact that Connecticut actually has a drunk driving problem. Recent analysis of 2017 crash data determined that Connecticut had the greatest percentage of drunk
driving fatalities of any state. So in Connecticut, it was 43 percent of all fatalities involving a driver who was over the limit as compared to 29 percent nationwide.

And I introduce this disturbing fact as a backdrop for consideration as we consider the legalization of recreational marijuana, a drug for which, unlike alcohol, as you’ve heard today, there’s no simple, accurate roadside test to measure impairment and when I say that, I don’t mean that it just hasn’t been invented yet. I actually mean that it’s not possible and I always do this little demonstration, forgive me if you’ve seen it before, but there’s been some talk about it today, so with alcohol and it being a different drug than the active THC, if this is the amount of alcohol in your blood and this is the impairment level of your brain, they go up and down together, so that’s why the roadside test works for alcohol, but the amount of active THC in your blood and the amount of impairment in your brain, there’s no correlation between the two.

So when we talk about being able to measure this number, there’s no scientific correlation that it would indicate impairment, so it ends up being a meaningless tool. So I’ll talk a little bit more about that, but as you can imagine, that creates some challenges for law enforcement and our court systems, some of which you’ve already heard about today. In some states, the way that the lawmakers try to deal with this is by establishing that threshold, the per se limit. AAA has done research of nine states where they’ve analyzed the per se limit and again they’ve determined that it’s a meaningless tool. AAA does have a standard that we
would support and I’d like to talk more about that if you have questions about that.

You’ve heard about the drug recognition experts. Right now, Connecticut has 50 drug recognition -- about 50 drug recognition experts, as compared to let’s say, New Jersey, which has almost 500. So -- And I’m happy to talk more the difference between the regular training for police officers and the drug recognition training which was also asked earlier today. I’m going to wrap up, though, by just also pointing out that Connecticut already has a drug driving problem. According to a report released in 2017 by the Governor’s Highway Safety Association, nationwide 43 percent of drivers who died in crashes were tested for drugs and tested positive. Here in Connecticut, that number is 63 percent and marijuana was the most prevalent drug. So I’m going to wrap up by saying that AAA supports H.B. 5152. We would be more than happy and welcome the opportunity to participate in your study, to offer our research for your study, anything that we can do to support public education around this issue and the safety of our highways.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Thank you. Are there any questions? Okay, seeing none -- Representative Dauphinais.

REP. DAUPHINAIS (44TH): Hi, thank you for your testimony. You said you could elaborate a little bit about some testing, is that what you said or did I misunderstand?

AMY PARMENTER: So yes, so instead of the per se limit that some states have adopted just in an attempt to kind of address and come up with a threshold, they established a per se limit of let’s
say 5 nanograms and it’s meaningless. What happens is, that means some people who are actually impaired will be able to drive away and other people who are not impaired will be arrested. So what AAA is recommending is actually something called a standard of permissible imprint and what that means it’s two prongs. One is that any level of active THC in the blood at all and also physiological or behavioral evidence of impairment as determined by a law enforcement officer, ideally a drug recognition expert, so in other words, it shows that there’s something in the blood, the active TCH, and there’s evidence that the person is impaired based on what the drug recognition officer has analyzed.

REP. DAUPHINAIS (44TH): So when you say the drug officer has analyzed in terms of their behavior on the road?

AMY PARMENTER: It could include that. When I talk about the drug recognition expert, you’ve heard earlier today that their analysis usually comes after arrest, it’s actually a 12-step analysis. Part of that analysis, as an example is that they interview the person, so if the person were to say well, yeah, I actually did smoke or ingest marijuana, you know, shortly before I got behind the wheel, that would be one indication just as an example, but yes, that would be part of it. If they’re driving all over and they have marijuana paraphernalia in the vehicle and it shows active THC in the blood, that combination of things as compared to just a number that doesn’t mean anything, that combination is what AAA is supporting as the standard.
REP. DAUPHINAIS (44TH): So that would be acceptable now in terms of testing someone to see if they’ve been --

AMY PARMENTER: That would be the standard that we promote, yes.

REP. DAUPHINAIS (44TH): Okay. And then just one other question, how long does it stay in your blood after you would smoke or eat marijuana?

AMY PARMENTER: Yeah, I mean, that’s the thing about THC, it’s -- and I’m not a toxicologist, but it does stay in your system for possibly weeks at a time. What you have is, it metabolizes differently with different people, so you might have someone who uses marijuana a lot, maybe they’re medical marijuana, so they might have a very high THC level but they’re not impaired, and somebody else who just ate their first gummy could be, you know, severely impaired and yet their number would not be up there.

REP. DAUPHINAIS (44TH): Okay, thank you.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Okay. Any other questions? Seeing none, thank you very much.

AMY PARMENTER: Thank you.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Next up is Chief Sansom from the town of East Hartford. Welcome, Chief. Just turn the microphone on.

SCOTT SANSOM: Am I good?

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Yes.

SCOTT SANSOM: Okay. I’m here for two -- do you want me to do both? First, I’m here, a retired deputy chief of Hartford PD and currently the chief of police for the town of East Hartford. I sit on
the board of CPCA and I’m here on behalf of CPCA, the Chiefs of Police Association of Connecticut. First while we’re still on the subject, House Bill No. 5152, AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY TO DETERMINE A WAY TO DETECT WHEN A DRIVER IS UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF MARIJUANA, we support this bill and we believe a study in determining when an operator is impaired by marijuana is necessary as it is a beneficial tool to ensure that the public is protected from operating under the influence of marijuana. Currently, the issue of marijuana-impaired driving is not adequately addressed within the current statutory scheme because there is no objective measure regarding marijuana impairment levels when it comes to operating a motor vehicle.

The neighboring state of Massachusetts has recently legalized marijuana for recreational use. There’s an overwhelming concern that the incidents of drug driving will increase in Connecticut as a result. Additionally, Massachusetts recognized that marijuana-impaired driving has not been adequately addressed within their current statutory scheme. They recently conducted a study regarding the current approach to detecting operating under the influence of marijuana and potential recommendations to better evaluate marijuana-impaired drivers. The CPCA has an obligation to protect the community by reinforcing safe driving habits and conducting this study would enable law enforcement agencies across Connecticut to implement the best practices regarding marijuana-impaired driving, ultimately ensuring the safety of the Connecticut motoring public.

It’s better I do that because I know some of you know me and I talk forever, so you know, when we
look at other communities that have had an increase in drug driving or have legalized recreational use of marijuana, they didn’t really know how to handle it, so most all the studies to see what best fit their communities and how they wanted to handle it. I think that would be the appropriate approach for us to do, as well.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Okay, thank you. Are there any questions? Representative Dauphinais.

REP. DAUPHINAIS (44TH): Hi. Thank you for your testimony. Is the AAA protocol acceptable to you?

SCOTT SANSOM: We would have to look at it because there’s -- it’s kind of connected to everything from law enforcement would be how we can actually detect and use some kind of chemical analysis on the street because we all have a field sobriety and we’re trained in that. The DRE is very effective, but very few people in the street are trained. I think we have to look -- we have to do the study because there are so many pieces that have to fit together and we have to look at that and see how we operate, so from the minute someone is driving impaired and the officer pulls over a car to how it’s adjudicated in court all have to be on the same page.

REP. DAUPHINAIS (44TH): Understood. Thank you.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Representative Hayes.

REP. HAYES (51ST): Thank you. Good afternoon, Chief.

SCOTT SANSOM: Good afternoon.

REP. HAYES (51ST): How many of these DRE’s -- is that what --
SCOTT SANSOM: Yeah.

REP. HAYES (51ST): How many do you have?

SCOTT SANSOM: We currently have none. I believe the closest to us, there’s one in South Windsor. It’s a very extensive course and not a lot of officers have it.

REP. HAYES (51ST): Do you happen to know what it could cost to put one officer through that training?

SCOTT SANSOM: No, but it would be quite expensive because you have housing and the actual cost of the training and there’s also the recertification.

REP. HAYES (51ST): Okay. So an officer that’s out on patrol and he observes this erratic driving, there’s probable cause for the stop. Correct?

SCOTT SANSOM: Correct.

REP. HAYES (51ST): Okay. And once the field sobriety test is done, that’s usually probable cause for the arrest?

SCOTT SANSOM: Correct.

REP. HAYES (51ST): Okay, but these specially trained officers for the most part would not be on those traffic stops? I mean, from what I’m hearing, most departments have a half a dozen for the bigger departments, one or two for the smaller departments, so the chances of one of these specialized training officers being on these traffic stops is slim?

SCOTT SANSOM: Right, correct.

REP. HAYES (51ST): Okay, so the test that they’re putting them through, the specialized training officer, the test that they’re putting these people
through, that’s basically going to be post arrest. is that right?

SCOTT SANSOM: Correct.

REP. HAYES (51ST): Okay. And as of right now, do you know -- if there’s two-prong test according to AAA and half is by the specialized officers and the second prong is the blood level, how long does it take for that blood level from that?

SCOTT SANSOM: That I don’t know.

REP. HAYES (51ST): Okay. Is there a way right now of getting that information immediately?

SCOTT SANSOM: No.

REP. HAYES (51ST): Thank you.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Representative Morin.

REP. MORIN (28TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Hello, Chief, how are you?

SCOTT SANSOM: Hello.

REP. MORIN (28TH): You know, sometimes I’m not in law enforcement so I might be trying to simplify something that’s very complicated, but right now today, people are driving while they’re high.

SCOTT SANSOM: Correct.

REP. MORIN (28TH): And then get tickets and arrested for it, right?

SCOTT SANSOM: Correct.

REP. MORIN (28TH): So what am I not seeing here because people get high now, whether we agree that marijuana should be legalized or not, that’s not the discussion, however, our neighbors, people all
around us, people are smoking pot and they’re getting high and they’re driving while they do it and if there’s -- there’s got to be a way and I know a trained police officer, somebody who’s got some experience, they’re doing -- they know, they get it, whether how it holds up, I don’t know all that stuff. Maybe those of you that, Mr. Chairman, the representative might be able to help me understand more and so I’m not trying to be a wiseguy to you, not at all, but I respect very much what the men and women --

SCOTT SANSOM: No, I know exactly where you’re coming from.

REP. MORIN (28TH): But I just don’t understand why this is going to be different, so help me.

SCOTT SANSOM: Well, sure. First, I purposely didn’t mention anything about us legalizing marijuana. I heard that’s a rumor that might happen, I don’t know. I think -- And why I did that was because it is happening right now, so this is -- even if we don’t legalize it, I think it’s something that needs to be looked at because, and I can’t speak on behalf of judicial, but we can make the arrest, but the real deterrence is what happens of the consequences of your actions and that happens on the judicial level. When we do see someone swerving all over and we pull up to the car and you can smell what you know as to be burnt marijuana and the eyes are red and the pungent odor and you’re getting real slow responses and things of that nature, you know there’s a multitude of things of probable cause to understand that this person is impaired and we can make that arrest on a probable cause.
So with alcohol, we take it a step further. So the person is under arrest in the street and then you have the chemical test and that’s what helps out in court. When you we -- when you don’t have that, the court -- the case gets dropped. In most instances, some are pled out, but I know many, many are pled out or I mean, are dropped. I had a conversation this morning unrelated. I talked to the commander of the Hartford traffic unit, who they deal with this a lot, and he said many cases, just because they don’t have the chemical test for the drug driving that many of them are disposed of, so which causes people find a niche and they’ll say, well, if they’re going to get thrown out and there’s no consequences or there’s less consequences of being caught than alcohol, then they’re going to choose that avenue and, you know, we don’t correct behavior. So as far as CPCA is concerned, if we could have a study to look into what best practices is to change the behavior of the driver, then we’re for it.

REP. MORIN (28TH): Fair enough and I appreciate that answer. So to your knowledge, there is no testing products or any guidelines throughout the country that address -- that could help us simplify this situation here?

SCOTT SANSON: There are. It would probably be better to have a toxicologist explain them. There’s something, it’s NG, it’s something in the blood that they can measure, but then there’s controversy even with that, saying what levels are they at or are you a chronic user or you’re not a chronic user. It’s not more of an exact science than a blood alcohol level. It’s complicated and two different states use two different things. That’s why we can’t like
just say okay, what is Colorado doing and let’s just use what they’re doing. I think we’ve got to customize it to the culture of Connecticut and how our judicial works and how we want it to look.

REP. MORIN (28TH): I appreciate the answer. My chief has been very much along your lines in his conversations with me and a lot of times, it’s just trying to understand what ramifications are going to come from what is put forth, but I still -- like I said, I just can’t get by all the stuff that happens now, right now, but you helped me, so thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Representative Vail.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good afternoon. It just says here, and if I missed it, I apologize, that you had an opinion on House Bill 6155? I just wondered what that opinion was on the regionalization?

SCOTT SANSOM: Yes, if you’d like, I could

REP. VAIL (52ND): No, you can just --

SCOTT SANSOM: So the answer is yes, we support it. CPCA supports it as long as it’s legislation that doesn’t -- it incentivizes to become regional and doesn’t penalize because all communities are different. Some it may a lot of sense and there’s some cost savings and a lot of beneficial things and to other communities, not so much.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Thank you.

SCOTT SANSOM: You’re welcome.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Representative Dauphinais.
REP. DAUPHINAIS (44TH): Thank you. So I have another question. So you said that if all the testing came back and you couldn’t prove anything, then they kind of get let go. I think that’s how I understood it, right? You couldn’t hold them to anything. So if you’re -- if you’re watching someone drive down the highway and they’re driving all over the road, going -- crossing the yellow line and perhaps could cause a head-on collision, are you saying that there’s -- in the end if you can’t determine what made them do that, that there’s no consequences?

SCOTT SANSOM: No, so we would still pull the person over. We would probably -- what you’re explaining, there’s a bunch of things. We could pull the person over and they’re having a diabetic issue, it’s happened to me many times, and, you know, you get them the help you need. There’s other times where, you know, emotional driving. That’s happened and maybe they end up with a ticket for the stop sign they went through or for the touching -- say they’re driving in the right lane or there’s other times you pull up and you immediately smell alcohol, you smell drugs, slurred speech, motor movement, skills that we’re trained in the academy to look at this person is probably driving under the influence.

So you pair up the driving behavior with the behavior of the operator, things you can see, touch, smell, the senses. It could be in plain view. You might have an open container or you have drug paraphernalia in the front seat, so you put all that together and you come to the conclusion that you developed probable cause, which is this person is probably driving under the influence, so the officer makes the arrest, they do a report, they bring him
to the station for processing. In alcohol related, they take a chemical test. Right now for drug driving, where you believe there are drugs, there is no further testing, so when that goes to court, there’s a lot of time judicially, there’s not much a prosecutor can do with that, so depending on how the case goes and the person’s record, many of those are disposed of without the person seeking consequences because of the further testing because you have a more solid case.

Similar to DWI or DUI when someone is driving under the influence of alcohol and say they blow under the legal limit, even though all that probable cause still exists and they did everything, the case isn’t going to go as far and they’ll dispose of it another way. That would probably be better for judicial to answer. So that’s what we’re concerned with because really, the police don’t change the behavior. It’s the consequences that our judicial system can give to deter the behavior of people driving.

REP. DAUPHINAIS (44TH): I guess my thought is, there’s a lot of things that people can do to make them drive erratically outside of medical issues, right?

SCOTT SANSOM: Right.

REP. DAUPHINAIS (44TH): I mean, obviously if you’re having a heart attack or a diabetic -- You know, whether it’s texting or eating or reading the paper or shaving or talking to the person next to you or having gotten into the car too tired, so it seems to me like across the board, those consequences if you’re putting someone else in danger should just be a given regardless of whether you’re smoking pot or
drinking or texting, all of those, so I’m just trying to understand how that bears out.

SCOTT SANSOM: Yeah, on the street, you’re number one priority for a police officer is to ensure the streets are safe. Like you said, many of those times, that’s all developed and this would never even come into question the drug driving. We would say oh, this is the reason, like I said, emotional driving and medical issues and things of that nature and there are other laws to deal with those, like the texting while driving or things of that nature. It’s when we do develop the cause that we believe this person is impaired by drugs, then we need to have further testing to help judicial to help their case.

REP. DAUPHINAIS (44TH): So the consequences of them driving unsafely and putting other people in danger vary depending on what brought on those consequences, so for example, if you’re eating and you hit somebody head-on and weren’t paying attention, the consequences could be less than if you were drinking? In other words, I guess I think if people make a decision to get a license and drive on the road, they have a responsibility to drive safely regardless of what they’re doing.

SCOTT SANSOM: Absolutely.

REP. DAUPHINAIS (44TH): You know, so I’m just trying to understand the consequences from a law enforcement -- I don’t know what all the different various laws are, but in my opinion, if you’re driving unsafely, you should be taken off the road regardless of what you’re doing. I think it goes back to Representative Morin’s statement that
there’s people out there that are doing this now anyway.

SCOTT SANSOM: You know, to the answer to that question, we -- and we do have a multitude of laws and infractions and even town ordinances that deal with those things and tools that are very effective. People know they’re going to get a ticket for distracted driving and people know, you know, they’re going to get a ticket when they’re erratically driving because they’re, you know, for whatever excuse we hear, so there’s -- there are things on the books that we can use effectively and they do work and people do have to pay a fine and they do go to court and judicial is able to use those laws to have an outcome where there’s a deterrent there. With the drug driving, there’s not that further test, so we need that to strengthen the case so they’ll have a deterrent effect on people that they’ll think twice before doing a drug and getting into a car and driving impaired.

REP. DAUPHINAIS (44TH): Okay. Thank you.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Representative Hayes.

REP. HAYES (51ST): Okay, we both came from the same background, so we overall try to treat everybody fairly across the void. So if alcohol is legal and someone drinks a couple of sips out of a beer and he gets stopped and now you still have the odor of alcohol on this person’s breath, but because it’s alcohol, we have a way to gauge the amount of alcohol in someone’s body.

SCOTT SANSOM: Correct.
REP. HAYES (51ST): So the person who consumed a little bit of alcohol very possibly would not be arrested for drunk driving. Correct?

SCOTT SANSOM: Correct.

REP. HAYES (51ST): If we were to legalize marijuana, the same person smokes a little bit of marijuana and he gets pulled over and now you smell the marijuana. Because we don’t have any way to gauge the level of being intoxicated under that drug, that person doesn’t stand a chance of being just a little bit intoxicated and not being arrested, so because there’s the odor of marijuana and because there’s marijuana in that person’s system and because we can’t gauge the amount of marijuana, that person is going to be arrested?

SCOTT SANSOM: Possibly.

REP. HAYES (51ST): Okay. So I guess the point I’m just trying to -- until we can get some kind of gauge on the percentage of THC in someone’s body, the person who drinks a little bit of beer can get away with it. The person who smokes a little bit of marijuana can’t. Is that fair?

SCOTT SANSOM: Yeah, you know, each and every scenario is a little different, you know, as you know and I think that’s why CPCA believes there needs to be study, what we feel is appropriate, because I think what’s going to have to happen is we’re going to have to come up a conclusion of what we want that to look like.

REP. HAYES (51ST): Someone coming home from work could stop and have one beer and not -- and get stopped and not necessarily get arrested. Someone coming home from work that smokes a little bit of
marijuana can get stopped, but most likely they’re going to get arrested because there’s the probable cause of the smell and the THC in the body.

SCOTT SANSOM: I think it can happen in both instances where we’ve had someone where you have the smell and they say well, I just did one beer, but a little bit of erratic driving and other things but you think this person is intoxicated, they’re arrested, and they don’t even register on the Intoxilyzer, so eventually the whole case is thrown out.

REP. HAYES (51ST): That one would be thrown out?

SCOTT SANSOM: Right.

REP. HAYES (51ST): Okay, but the court -- I don’t know if the court can throw out the other one because there’s still a little bit of marijuana, but they don’t know how to tell how much?

SCOTT SANSOM: Currently from what I’m told, like as of this morning, is many, many drugs, and it’s not just marijuana, a lot of drug driving instances, the don’t have that further testing so those cases are thrown out at a higher level.

REP. HAYES (51ST): So it’s a good idea to have the study?

SCOTT SANSOM: Yes.

REP. HAYES (51ST): Thank you.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Okay. Are there any other questions and seeing none, thank you, Chief. It was good seeing you today.

SCOTT SANSOM: Thank you.
REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Next up is Director Mike Loiz. Okay, I don’t see Mike Loiz. Allan Olenick? Allan Olenick, I don’t see him. Keith Molinar, Keith Molinar? Lucy Nolan? Don’t all come up at once here. Chief Nick Baulter? We heard from him. Oh, okay, come on up.

NICK GLOMB: Good afternoon. My name is Nick Glomb. I live in Manchester. I am here in favor of House Bill 5156, a bill for first responders training. Good afternoon, my name Nick Glomb. I live in Manchester, Connecticut. I have Down syndrome and I am concerned about relations between law enforcement and people who have intellectual disabilities. I did graduate from Partners in Policymaking last year, so I am very, very concerned about this bill. You know, I am in favor of this bill to get the state of Connecticut to move forward on this bill. Please amend this bill to include intellectual disabilities and please pass this bill. Thank you very much.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Okay, thank you for your testimony. Are there any questions? Okay, seeing none, thank you very much.

NICK GLOMB: Thank you.

WALTER GLOMB: Mind if I take my turn?

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Sure. Just state your name for the record, please.

WALTER GLOMB: Good evening. My name is Walter Glomb. I am the director of the Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities and I am here to testify in favor of House Bill 5156. I won’t spend much time. I’m glad you had a chance to hear from Nick, one of our distinguished graduates of our
partisan policy-making program. He actually worked in this issue last summer for his project, interviewing local law enforcement about the relationship between law enforcement and students with disabilities. You know, I think the value of the bill is self-evident. Individuals with autism and other disabilities are often misunderstood, I think, by law enforcement and first responders, especially those with autism who have sensory issues where their behavior may be driven by certain actions, sounds, movement, whatever. I think it’s important that our law enforcement be aware of that.

In my support of the bill, if you have my written testimony, you see I would respectively ask that you amend it if you’re going to do this sort of training to also include individuals with intellectual disabilities, because whether it’s an individual with Down syndrome, like my son, or an individual with autism, the issues are generally similar. If you’re going to conduct this kind of training, I would hope it would be broader and include people with various types of disabilities where there may be issues, you know, difficulties communicating, misinterpretations, misunderstandings that sadly can sometimes lead to tragic consequences and that’s all I have to say. Thank you

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Thank you. Are there any questions? Seeing none, thank you, sir.

WALTER GLOMB: Thank you.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Next is Deputy Chief Christopher Chute from New Britain. Mark Swenson?

MARK SWENSON: Thank for this opportunity. My name is Mark Swenson. I’m here for Bill 6195. I’m a
teacher. I changed fields and I did not teach for many years. On retirement, I wanted to go back to teaching and I started off trying to substitute. I was informed that I needed to get fingerprinted and a background check. I was directed to the state police barracks, I filled out the forms, was fingerprinted and paid all the fees. Later that same month, I learned that I might inherit some old firearms. I inquired at the state police and was told I needed to come back down to the police station, fill out the same forms, and get more fingerprints. The accumulation of fees was quite high.

I submitted a bit more, but in line with brevity, I’ll skip to the chase. I think the state of Connecticut or I ask the state of Connecticut to consider standardizing some of the forms for background checks and also for fingerprinting, which is digitalized, so I had two, three different sets of fingerprints done. This would set up a central databank for this type of information or something of that thinking. Allow cross-referencing of this data between state agencies. In other words, the board of ed could see a background check that maybe DMV or firearms required, have a renewal date that the citizen might be responsible for updating this information like a driver’s license. Don’t put it on the state, put it on the citizen. To summarize, this could save data storage space within state agencies, possibly reduce departmental cost, eliminate hours and hours of state personnel time, maybe freeing them up to a bit more productive. This concept would also help citizen frustration, save residents and possibly the state time and money. Citizens of Connecticut are asking for this
type of thinking from our state legislature. Thank you.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Thank you for your common sense ideas.

MARK SWENSON: Thank you.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Are there any questions? Okay, seeing none, thank you very much. Next up is William Church.

WILLIAM CHURCH: Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is William Church and I am testifying in favor of Proposed House Bill 5152, CONCERNING A STUDY TO DETECT WHEN A DRIVER IS UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF MARIJUANA. However, that study should take place before deciding to legalize recreational marijuana. My son, Dustin, was killed by a drunk and drugged driver. That driver had marijuana in her system. If you’re a parent, it is the worst possible thing that can happen. The life of your family is never the same. For nearly 15 years now, I have spent time on the capitol looking to get better drunk driving laws and therefore make our roads safer and now, many want to legalize another drug that causes impairment while knowing very little about it.

The reality is science has been unable to establish a level of Delta 9 THC in a person’s system that accurately determines impairment. Colorado chose 5 nanograms per milliliter arbitrarily with no scientific proof. In addition, blood, the gold standard, is problematic because Delta 9 THC is stored in fat cells. According to the Journal of Physiology, lipid content around the brain affects brain function, so the levels of Delta 9 THC found
in the blood may not accurately reflect the impairment the drug is actually causing.

In Connecticut, even drawing blood is very difficult because of the consent statute. There are no expedited electronic warrants, so by the time a roadside test is completed, a warrant requested and then delivered, it may be too late to determine even if the highly disputed 5 nanogram level is even there. That’s because the peak impairment below -- from peak impairment to below 5 nanograms takes about an hour and 15 minutes. Connecticut has 169 towns with three shifts for law enforcement, yet we only have 53 drug recognition experts. That is 454 DREs short of providing minimum coverage. These are just a few of the many concerns with testing marijuana in drivers, but from a public safety perspective, there is also the 17 percent increase in violent crime, 12 percent increase in property crimes, and nearly 11 percent increase in homelessness in Colorado since recreational marijuana was legalized in 20102.

During that same period, Colorado’s budget has increased by $7.2 billion dollars while tax revenue from marijuana sales in 2018 was only $211 million dollars. This study and many other studies need to take place before any consideration is given to legalizing recreational marijuana. Once people know the true information, my hope is that good decisions will be made. Several of you made some great points and asked some very interesting questions and I wanted to explain something about the process that happens, whether it’s for alcohol, arrested for drunk driving, or arrested for drugged driving and this -- first of all, Connecticut is a diversion state, so if you’re arrested for the first time, you
have the option of not having it become a conviction. With those drugged drivers, administrative per se can’t do anything and it may up to be two years before those with drugs in their system face the criminal charges.

So that -- hopefully that gives you sort of an idea. It is a current problem and potentially it will be an even bigger problem, so some of the things that need to be done need to be done now and needed to be done in the past, as well as continue to do those in the future. Thank you very much and I’m willing to answer any questions.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Thank you, sir. Are there any questions? Seeing none, thank you for your testimony. Susan Yankee.

SUSAN YANKEE: Hello, Happy Valentine’s Day. I am here in support of Bill 6951 regarding the communication needs for deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf/blind individuals in emergency situations. I’m on the Governor’s Advisory Board for the deaf and hard of hearing and we originally kind of created this proposal and thank you for making it a bill and thank you for having a public hearing. I am one of the two moms on the board. My son, Eric, is hard of hearing and a sophomore in high school and every day I send him to school knowing he might not hear an emergency announcement or an officer telling him to stand down in a lockdown situation. He won’t know where to run since he can’t tell which direction the shooting is coming from. He could run towards the shooter. What about our students who can’t hear the shooting at all?

Since Sandy Hook, there have been at least 239 school shootings nationwide and still there is no
federal or state mandate regarding students with disabilities in emergency or lockdown situations. So this bill hopefully will also address how can you train officers to look for cochlear implants and hearing aids when a child is not complying with their orders and also in a lockdown in Connecticut high schools, the procedure is to lock the door and if a student is in a hallway, so if a child who cannot hear is the restroom, he’s casually coming back and the door is locked and he doesn’t know why. So in addition to the basic emergency train -- for emergency responders, the ASL, it should go to all teachers and all students so they know the basic signs of get down, hands up, quiet, so that they can communicate silently and efficiently in a lockdown situation.

So all students who can’t hear do not know ASL, so my son doesn’t know ASL and if a teacher is whispering instructions in a lockdown, he can’t hear her, so everybody could learn some basic signs, it would save so many lives, even students that are maybe nonverbal and an officer can communicate with them and they can communicate back without speaking and if you move from Norwich to Stratford and you know the same ASL signs that was in your school in Norwich, you’re going to be safe on day one, so that’s all I have and thank you so much for bringing this up as a bill.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Thank you.

SUSAN YANKEE: Thanks.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Are there any questions? Seeing none, thank you. Deborah Ellingsworth.
DEBORAH ELLINGSWORTH: Good afternoon, esteemed members of this body and Happy Valentine’s Day. My name is Deborah Ellingsworth and I am pleased to be here today, glad to be invited here today, to testify to my total support for Bill No. 5055 and my understanding, I must say my limited understanding of the bill itself, is that it would enable the bail commissioner’s office to no longer be allowed to take someone from say Whalley Avenue and then just drop them to the streets. Let me be more specific, my son, John James Del Buono, age 31, was in Whalley Avenue. He landed in Whalley Avenue on March 12th, his 31st birthday of last year, and he was Type 1 insulin dependent diabetic and he was well known to the Waterbury court system for 13 years, so he was well known in that system and he could not seem to get himself out of it, all sorts of petty stuff came up time after time.

The court system became entrenched and I became -- and I began to advocate with DMAS and the commissioner’s office of DMAS and did so much work in the way of trying to enable -- ensure that John was court-ordered to substance abuse treatment, but for unknown reasons that still I don’t know the reasons why, the state of Connecticut is cutting off supplies -- sources allowing someone to get court-ordered substance abuse treatment programs and DMAS emphatically told me that in the courthouse in Waterbury. I got John’s internal medicine doctor to write a letter to the court explaining the reasons why John needed to go to court-ordered substance abuse treatment.

Well, anyway, he spent approximately six weeks at Whalley Avenue. DMAS went in and did a judicial review intake eval and the recommendation was for
court-ordered treatment and just four days he was to be transported from Whalley to the Waterbury Court, a bail officer, a bail bondsman, went to the Whalley Avenue jailhouse and went with a promise to pay, just took John out on a promise to pay, and we in the family, he comes from a big Italian family, my father is an attorney. We were very much involved. He has many, many people around him who loved him to no end. He was 31 years old on this day -- went into Whalley on his 31st birthday March 12th and six weeks later a bail bondsman went in, released him on a promise to pay, and within a matter of hours he was dead, finding him on the streets in Waterbury with a needle in his arm and he died from three forms of fentanyl in his system. So this bill, I believe, is to ensure that bail bondsmen are no longer able to take someone out of Whalley on a promise to pay and then call me up as his mother two days later looking for the $2,000 dollars that Johnny promised to pay and for me to just say you know, not two days later, but for me to tell the bail bondsman he’s dead.

So there’s got to be some chain of custody in this system, in the criminal justice system. I’ve been sitting here listening -- my nephew, Jason, died from a drunk driver when he was 19 years old. My brother, Nick, was assaulted with a baseball bat and lived for 27 years blind, crippled, and unable to talk at the YMCA at Waterbury. I was born in Waterbury. I am telling you that Waterbury is no longer the Waterbury we all once knew about. It has changed and the criminal system in Waterbury has changed and it needs to be evaluated. John would be alive today. I wrote a three-page letter to the judge of the court in Waterbury. I was waiting. I
was very much involved in John’s life before he went to Whalley Avenue on March 12th. He would be alive today had the bail bondsman not taken him out of Whalley and just dropped him to the streets off Waterbury where he died hours later.

Now I’m very pleased that this bill has been proposed. I strongly urge you to not only look at this instance, but please go further and dig into the criminal justice system as to what is going on. He had been involved with the court for 13 years. He was a Type 1 insulin-dependent diabetic. He had me and his stepfather in Southbury, he had his Aunt Sally in Waterbury, he had his sister, his aunt in Bloomfield, he had so many family members, grandparents in Watertown, the bail bondsman could have easily driven John from Whalley to one of our family member’s home where we could have been maybe gone to the court and for whatever the reason, there is no drug court that referrals are being made to. Those CCSD referrals that we all knew years ago that existed, those are gone, folks. I don’t know where they went, but I begged and begged and begged to where I became good at begging for John’s life.

And he was 31 years old when he died on May 4th and I’m still not over it. I called and I thanked Representative Arthur O’Neill to help me because, you know, as I said, he was found with three forms of fentanyl in his body and the drug cartels are alive and kicking in Waterbury and it’s not going to go away. The numbers are expected to beyond belief, it’s increased, if this doesn’t get intercepted in a way that makes sense for everyone, so I understand currently what happens in the criminal justice system the hard way I learned it. I’ve never had criminal court and justice in my life. I’ve served
25 years with the state of Connecticut in child protective services, so I don’t understand how in the adult system, if we in child protective services could not bring a child to somewhere. You just don’t drop them in the street.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Thank you, Deborah, for your testimony and I’m sorry about your loss. Are there any questions? Thank you very much for your testimony. Thank you.

DEBORAH ELLINGSWORTH: Thank you.


BRENDA VERA: Thank you for allowing me to provide my testimony. My name is Brenda Vera. I live in New Haven. I’ve been working with DMV for three and half years and I’m here to support Bill 6376. I graduated from the police academy in 2015. I am fully certified under -- pursuant to Section 7-294a to 7-294e. When I discovered that none of the members of my department were peace officers as defined in 53a-3(9) of the general statutes, I was dismayed. I graduated from the Connecticut Police Academy, received POST certification, wore a police uniform, got a badge, patrolled the highway in a police cruiser and ensured public safety. My coworkers and I risk our lives every day with the intention of helping the public and getting home safe to our loved ones. Being a peace officer affords officer rights and protection under the color of law. I’m just asking to -- I’m just asking to get added in the definition of a peace officer as my classmates from the police academy. Being added in the definition of peace officer will give us the
protection and rights as other agencies and my family will be protected as well if something should happen to me while I’m in the -- Every day I drive on the highway and I think about my safety. Sometimes I do traffic stops, commercial vehicle stops, I’m there and if something -- if I were to get hit and something tragically happens to me on the highway, my son is not going to get covered because I’m not in that definition of peace officer. Please make this changes so I can go back home to my family every day. Please support House Bill 6376 for motor vehicle inspectors to be added to the definition. This would not cost the state any money and allow us to continue to do our jobs safely and effectively and I also support the Bill H.B. 5156 for law enforcement to get trained for dealing with children with autism because I have a child that has autism as well and thank you for taking your time today.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Thank you. Is it safe to assume that you’re Paul Lemieux?

PAUL LEMIEUX: That’s correct.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Okay, why don’t -- you can go ahead and then we can ask a few questions.

PAUL LEMIEUX: Good afternoon. My name is Paul Lemieux. I’m a resident of Bristol. I’m here to seek support for House Bill 6376. I’ve been a police officer for the town of Farmington, being hired in 1987. I’ve worked there for 24 years, retired in 2011. At that point, I stayed on as a part-time police officer and currently hold that position today. In 2011, I was hired as a motor vehicle inspector for the Department of Motor Vehicles. I graduated from the Connecticut Police
As inspectors, we all graduate from the Connecticut Police Academy and are certified police officers. A peace officer definition by statute today currently applies to individuals with no police academy training or police certification. Some of these are judicial marshals, corrections officers, and state marshals. A few current laws that reference peace officers that do not apply to us currently as inspectors are 29-1k, emergency alert system used for suspects that are killed — that killed or gravely injured a peace officer, as was discussed before, vehicle black box 146-164aa, and one that hits home to me a little bit is the arson, 531a-11. Back on June 2, 2017, I was on patrol in my vehicle for the department of motor vehicles and I came upon a three-family house that was fully engulfed in flames in the town of Plymouth in the early morning hours. There were no first responders there on the scene at the time.

Some residents were outside. They told me that the first and second floor residents they hadn’t seen. I entered the first floor house and smoky conditions, cleared that floor. The second floor, which was fully engulfed in flames, the elderly man was there. I forged open a door, but couldn’t enter because of the heavy smoke and flames, but at least I was able to coax him out to the back window where we hung outside awaiting rescue by firemen, which did happen. Any future legislation that writes in
the terms of peace officer as of today would not imply to us as inspectors. Inspectors will have an increased role in traffic safety if legislation is passed to implement tolls on our highway systems. Drivers including commercial vehicles will find alternate routes around toll stations to reduce their cost at the expense of our business and retail -- as the expense of our business and residential communities.

Applying peace officer designation to the motor vehicle inspector will not distract us from our mission, reducing accidents involving commercial vehicles on our roads, our 30 is derived from Connecticut General Statute 1408. This will not expand our police powers and it’s a no-cost initiative. So in closing, I ask that you support one of your law enforcement agencies that have been left out by this definition by supporting House Bill 6376. Thank you.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Thank you. Any questions? I just have a question. Who do you guys report to? Like do you guys have a chief?

PAUL LEMIEUX: We have a command -- like our command structure, we have sergeants and we have two lieutenants and we have a division chief who is a non-sworn civilian and we fall under the commissioner of motor vehicles.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): It’s kind of what’s not lost -- I mean, a lot of this doesn’t make sense why it is and the way it is now to me, so I hear what you’re saying, but I don’t -- this has been going on for a couple of years since I’ve been up here. We’ve had similar bills and similar hearings, but I, to my knowledge, I don’t recall seeing someone like
a chief or someone from the administration advocating for your department.

PAUL LEMIEUX: I know in the past they’ve written testimony and I think there is some included. I know there was last time we appeared here in 2017.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): All right, I’ll double check that. So obviously they are in support of --

PAUL LEMIEUX: The commissioner in 2017 did write a letter of support and I believe the assistant commissioner did file a written brief for you today.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Okay, thanks.

Representative Morin.

REP. MORIN (28TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What is -- Who is a peace officer for a novice? Are local municipality police officers considered peace officers?

PAUL LEMIEUX: There’s two definitions of peace officer, one in the statute gives you a definition of a peace officer, which includes correction officers, judicial marshals, and there’s a variety of other state police, municipality police members. When you say police officer, that’s by definition used by the POST, police officer standard training council, so they’re kind of intertwined and sometimes they get mixed up, I guess you can call it.

REP. MORIN (28TH): Okay. And the added benefit of you folks and how many people would this affect?

PAUL LEMIEUX: Well, there’s 49 current ones and there are two that are in the police academy, so 51 right now.
REP. MORIN (28TH): Okay, and this would allow you -- explain to me a little bit the benefits of how this -- we would be benefitted and how it could be helpful to the communities?

PAUL LEMIEUX: I believe there was previous testimony, I think 63 or 64 current laws that reference peace officers. I just selected a few of them today that are pertinent to our job. One of them is 14164, the vehicle black box. Well, you have to be a peace officer to get the information from that, technically on that, that’s a motor vehicle charge. We should be able to do that. We do accident scene investigations and what not. The arson one could come across some kind of fire or something explodes in the thing and puts us at risk. You know, we’re all on the highways and on the local roads every day. Hopefully I won’t have to come across any more burning buildings on my shift, but I need to take action, I wouldn’t hesitate to do it again. The emergency alert system, it talks specifically about if a suspect kills or gravely injures a peace officer that they can use that emergency alert system to broadcast who they’re looking for. Right now it doesn’t apply to me, so if my patch says Farmington that I work maybe four hours a month, it applies. When I work 40 hours a week for motor vehicle, it doesn’t apply, so I shouldn’t have any -- there shouldn’t be a difference. We should be included. We’re the only law enforcement agency that doesn’t have that designation of peace officer in the definition.

REP. MORIN (28TH): Okay. Thank you very much. Thanks for sharing.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Representative Hayes.
REP. HAYES (51ST): Thank you. I’m trying to wrap my brain here. I can’t think of another profession that is required to go through the police academy that is not considered a peace officer. Is there another one? Can you help me out?

PAUL LEMIEUX: Another profession, well, there are some here that have, like I said, as I used my example before, corrections officers, and not pointing out nothing negative against these, just the way the definition in the statute, judicial marshals that protect our courts, transfer prisoners, corrections officers, and state marshals that serve papers. Under the law, they’re considered peace officers.

REP. HAYES (51ST): Right, and that was exactly my point. Your outfit is the only one I can think of that is required to go through the police academy that is not considered a peace officer.

PAUL LEMIEUX: In order for me to maintain my job as an inspector, I have to stay as a certified police officer and I have to keep my truck inspection to federal certification, so it’s a two-step process.

REP. HAYES (51ST): Anybody else graduating from the police academy would be considered a peace officer except for the motor vehicle inspectors?

PAUL LEMIEUX: We have two recruits in the academy right now. They will get out, they will finish their field training, and they will be certified as police officers, current police officers.

REP. HAYES (51ST): But on the statute, they won’t be considered peace officers?
PAUL LEMIEUX: Correct, under the definition, they’re not.

REP. HAYES (51ST): Thank you.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Representative Fusco followed by Representative Vail.

REP. FUSCO (81ST): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So as the good chairman pointed out, this has been a couple of years now we’ve been going through this. So what opposition, if any, do you know of that’s been prevented that keeps this from going through?

PAUL LEMIEUX: I don’t know of any specific opposition this year. In the past, it’s been the state police union has opposed this and an expansion of our powers to make arrests. We have statewide authority, but it’s limited under 14-8 to motor vehicle activity, so we do have investigators in our auto theft unit that do apply -- recover stolen vehicles. They apply for warrants for that. That’s motor vehicle related even though you’re using a larceny statute. They can do that. We’re not responding to domestic violence calls, bank robberies. If something happens right in front of me, I’m going to do what I have to do, right. I’ve been doing it for 31 years, just like I did with that arson. I’m not a fireman, but I’m going to try to help somebody out as best I can, but we’re not jumping calls or responding to criminal incidents.

REP. FUSCO (81ST): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Representative Vail.

REP. VAIL (52ND): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I support this a hundred percent and it’s -- you’d think the state police would support it since you
work in conjunction with them so much on the highways and so on, but just to throw that out there. Let’s not pick on correction officers because I used to be one, so.

PAUL LEMIEUX: Thank you, sir.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Thanks for pointing that out, sir. I don’t want to belabor this, but just to be clear, under the motor vehicle statutes, 14, you’re limited as far as what you could do, but when you go and get the POST certification, there’s no limits. You’re a certified police officer?

PAUL LEMIEUX: That’s correct.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Just like the regular municipal police officer?

PAUL LEMIEUX: Yes.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): It’s the statute that limits you?

PAUL LEMIEUX: That’s correct.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Okay, I just wanted to make that clear. Representative, welcome. It’s always nice to see you.

REP. FUSCO (81ST): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, good to see you, too. Good afternoon, just a quick question, the DMV officers that are at the weigh stations, if you covered this, I apologize, you see something, a criminal act there on our highways, but you can -- what can you do? Do you have to call someone else or do you have the power of arrest?

PAUL LEMIEUX: So you’re talking if we see something criminal that comes in in a truck at the weigh station?
REP. FUSCO (81ST): Right, or even from your view from the --

PAUL LEMIEUX: While I’m on patrol, yeah. I have a duty to act depending on what that is. If I’m stopping a truck for an inspection and I find drugs, guns like I have, I will do what I have to do to secure the weapon, make sure the scene is safe, call the state police or whatever jurisdiction I’m in. If I’m in the city of Bristol, the city of Hartford, I’ll call them. They will take the criminal arrest and I’ll complete my inspection and tow the vehicle or whatever I need to do.

REP. FUSCO (81ST): You get back and you bring it right up to the point of the arrest --

PAUL LEMIEUX: That’s correct. And if I, you know, we have handcuffs and everything. If I need to get to that point, I will, but I’m not taking credit for the criminal arrest. I will give that to another agency, I’ll write my reports, tell them how I found it so they have their probable cause, but I’m not actually taking the person into custody and fingerprinting them, pictures and everything.

REP. FUSCO (81ST): Okay. Thank you very much.

PAUL LEMIEUX: You’re welcome.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Thank you. Are there any other questions? Seeing none, thank you very much for your testimony.

PAUL LEMIEUX: Thank you very much.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Lucy Nolan, followed by Sheila McClure.
LUCY NOLAN: Good afternoon and thank you for allowing me to come back. I’m sorry I missed the initial call. My name is Lucy Nolan. I am the director of public policy at policy and public relations for the Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence. I’m here today to speak on House Bill 5657, AN ACT CONCERNING THE COLLECTION OF STORAGE AND ANALYSIS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT EVIDENCE COLLECTION KITS. The Alliance is a statewide coalition of nine community-based sexual assault centers, crisis service centers, and our mission is to create communities free of sexual violence, to provide culturally affirming trauma and informed advocacy prevention and intervention services centered on the voice of the survivors. I want to first thank the committee for the work that you’ve done in the past on this sexual assault kits. Connecticut has had some really great successes working on this and that’s basically why I’m here today to let you know a little bit about that.

Your work, you’ve really given sexual assault victims a voice to know what’s happened with their kits. In 2015, there were 1,000 kits that hadn’t been tested, weren’t -- hadn’t gone to the Department of -- DSS, I’m sorry, I can’t -- it’s been a long day -- that were not sent to the crime lab for testing. Through you guys, through you all, we set up a work group and we were able to get those -- do -- ask law enforcement to -- we had the kits surveyed. We surveyed our law enforcement in Connecticut and found out where the kits were, had them sent to the crime lab. The backlog is almost completely done. In 2016, there was a sexual assault working group that was started and one of the things that they did was come up with a bar code
system that they put on all the kits, so from the beginning when a kit, you get the bar code on it.

When somebody is tested, the bar code is scanned and then throughout each process, the bar -- the kit is scanned, so we always know where it is and I added to my testimony that you may have that this is through UPS. We contracted with UPS to use their system and it’s a tracking system that goes from the beginning to end and currently, we’re working with the group, the working group, to figure out how to make sure the victims can be notified and finally do a web-based system.

So we’re doing these things. They are getting collected, they’re getting -- everyone knows where they are all the time, and they’re getting completed, so I just wanted to let you all know that things are happening and it’s on a great track and to thank you all for helping this move along.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): Well, that’s good news. Thank you. Appreciate that information. Any questions? Okay, seeing none, thank you.

LUCY NOLAN: Great. Thank you very much.

REP. VERRENGIA (20TH): I don’t see anyone else, but I will call on her, Sheila McClure. No? All right, that concludes our sign up list. That concludes our public hearing. Meeting is adjourned.